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**BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE
PEACE CONFERENCE**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

BY
VERNON BARTLETT



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EXPLANATORY NOTE

SOME one said to me the other day that only very great men and very conceited men ever wrote fore-words to their books. So we will call these few lines an Explanatory Note, or A Note of Warning.

An Explanatory Note because I would wish to point out that if some points are left a little obscure and if, by not being in a position to quote the exact words of any member of the Council of Four on any given occasion, I do not sound as though I had been 'behind the scenes,' the blame must be laid upon the authorities who laid down the stipulations for the strictest secrecy. Nearly every member of the official British Delegation could lift the curtain and show you all that lay behind the scenes very much more successfully than I can, only the members of the official British Delegation will not do so because they were all bound to secrecy. The next best person is the

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(. . .)

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journalist, who has to make a point of knowing nearly as much, if not even more, about the world's stage than do the principal players themselves. So, as a journalist, I have tried to give some little idea of the stars of the Peace Conference stage and of their courses.

A Note of Warning, because I feel it only right that people, before spending a shilling or so, should be warned that I have been unable to keep my own opinions entirely out of the pages that follow. I have learnt, since I began this little book, how very difficult it is to balance oneself on the fence of neutrality, and it would not take a reader very long to discover that I am a supporter of the ideas of President Wilson as opposed to those of M. Clemenceau. But I have tried to give an impartial view, lest I should write things that were unjust. Facts are such elastic things that you can pull them this way or that to suit your pleasure, so I have had to be very careful not to stretch them so as to suit my own beliefs and feelings. I do not want my own personal disappointment at certain portions of the Peace Treaty to tinge this book

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with bitterness or to make the criticisms, where there are any, appear unfair. I would apologise in advance to any one whose actions I have misjudged, and again I would blame that system of secrecy that only allowed us to catch glimpses now and then of what was happening *dans les coulisses*.

NOTE

This book was completed before the middle of June, but certain circumstances over which neither the Author nor the present Publishers had any control have rendered earlier publication impossible.

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CHAPTER I

TO CONSOLE THOSE WHO WERE NOT THERE

WHEN the man who did all his soldiering at the Base or in the War Office is able to tell vivid tales of his 'active service' without fear of being 'caught out,' when the children and grandchildren crowd reverently round the sword that hangs in the drawing-room and that was never worn except on 'route marches,' or on church parade when it got between its owner's legs, when the best tunic has degenerated into an old gardening coat, we shall probably look back at the Peace Conference and feel very glad that we were there.

At present every one is sick to death of the Hotel Majestic and the Hotel Astoria, and the very mention of Supreme Councils or Commissions or Committees.

Firstly, Paris had not improved with the war and the Parisians saw no reason why the other

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Allies should not pay heavily out of their own pockets for the benefit of industry and trade in France. The prices were more than enough to frighten every one who was only receiving his ordinary London salary. All the restaurants and cafés (for the first two months, at least) closed at half-past nine in the evening, and an iniquitous system of coupons kept the more provident in the Hotel Majestic for all their meals. You paid for your meals by coupons, and if you had a meal elsewhere you paid for it in hard cash and your coupons for that meal were as useless as old theatre tickets. So you stayed in the hotel and played bridge.

And what a place the Majestic was ! It made you think of your schooldays again, with your lords and masters always present, and always talking shop ! In either dining-room you were certain to find at least one plenipotentiary, so that you were forced to conclude either that the British Empire had far more delegates to the Conference than it should have—which was what most of the other nations thought—or that those plenipotentiaries were

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inordinately fond of food. The main dining-room looked exactly like the dining-room of a railway hotel—the staff, as a matter of fact, did come chiefly from the Midland Railway Hotel in Manchester—and the cooking was half French and half English with the defects of both and the qualities of neither. It was one of those places where the *menu* is printed in French, but where you have to give your order in English, and it was said that Mr Hughes and other Dominion statesmen, who were known to be studying French, were doing so in order that they might have some knowledge of what they were going to eat. To communicate from the outer world by telephone either with the Hotel Majestic or the Hotel Astoria was for many weeks almost an impossibility, as the operators there did not know French and therefore ignored the French lines altogether. And the authorities, whoever they were, who chose the Hotel Majestic as the home of the British Delegation do not seem to have realised how bad were the communications with theatre-land.

I think the people who were the most disappointed

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from the material point of view—because they had had the greatest expectations—must have been the lady secretaries and typists. It seemed very nice to receive from a benevolent Government a gift of £25 with which to buy clothes, and then—Paris was always Paris. Many of the early arrivals were told to choose their own bedrooms, and settled down contentedly on the first floor in rooms with bathrooms attached; their first disillusion came before 1919 was many days old, when they were turned away from the lap of luxury to make room for ‘big wigs’ of the delegation, and when they drifted up, floor by floor, to small rooms somewhere near the top of the building; their second disillusion was the discovery that nearly the only place in which they could display their clothes was in the Hotel Majestic itself, where their new dresses soon began to pall.

But the rest of us have had our disappointments, too. ✓ There are those of us who had hoped that the Peace Conference might be a Conference at which people would try hard to make a peace that would last, who thought that there was some

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truth in all the talk about 'a war to end war,' that new principles would guide us, and that we had finished with secret covenants and the wholesale barter of peoples and countries.)

Even before the Conference began Sir Basil Thompson, Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department, son of the late Archbishop of York, former Prime Minister of Tonga, author, Governor of Dartmoor Prison, etc., etc., had set up a very efficient service to preserve secrecy. The object, was, of course, laudable—to prevent German espionage, of which, I am told, there was very little—but the precautions seemed inconsistent with 'open covenants openly arrived at.' Every journalist had to have a pass and every visitor to the Majestic was questioned by one of the discreet gentlemen who hovered near the door and was led to a book in which he had to write his name and business. About half way through the Conference people became less severe and a visitor might even sit down in the lounge to wait, but later the Secret Service got busy again and every new-comer was stored away in a side room

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to 'wait until called for' by the man he wished to see.

Then the most elaborate steps were taken to assure the complete destruction of every scrap of waste paper from the Hotel Astoria, where were the offices of the delegation, and the Villa Majestic, a pleasant little building that housed the British section of the Peace Conference Secretariat. The lady secretaries were supposed to be carefully herded about by 'chaperones,' less to protect their morals than to avoid risks of indiscreet talking, and there was serious discussion as to what should be done to two male members of the delegation who once came home at six o'clock in the morning. Lastly, nearly every member of every delegation was desired to make formal promises not to give information away to people who, like myself, 'write for the papers.' Open diplomacy, forsooth!

There were, of course, exceptions. Not every one was as conscientious as Baron Makino, who, even when things looked very black for Japan, was probably more discreet than any other plenipotentiary at the Conference. The Americans,

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especially Colonel House, liked to say what they thought, and Mr Lloyd George, had the greatest difficulty to keep Mr Hughes quiet. The Australian Prime Minister is very deaf indeed, but he evidently can still hear the sound of his own voice, and loves to do so. Sir Robert Borden, who is justly anxious to alter the constitution of the British Empire so as to give the Dominions a larger say in things and who would appear to have no love for English Viceroys, was very outspoken at times, and the comments of General Smuts were often such as one might expect from a Socialist or Labour Member of Parliament. He was certainly under no illusions as to the dangers incurred by the continued existence of private armament factories. Mr Lloyd George himself sometimes gave away secrets that no one else would have dared to mention. And even the Secret Police failed on occasions. A Government official who was entirely unknown to these vigilant gentlemen, walked straight upstairs at the Hotel Astoria one morning and into the room of one of the leading members of the British delegation, without being stopped at all. The room was empty,

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and on the desk lay the most secret of secret documents, spread out for any one to read. But such things happened rarely, and most members of the British delegation now walk furtively, like stage burglars, as though they thought they were being followed. Some people used Government motor-cars to take them to the theatre, or into the country, but they must have felt very much like schoolboys stealing apples in an orchard. They looked happy enough, but they must have felt like that.

And the monotony of it all! The continual statements that peace would be made in a fortnight, the continual postponements, the official decision that it must be signed by the beginning of April—and when April came the troubles of the Allies were only just beginning!

The long-promised 'open diplomacy' dwindled down to a few very carefully-staged plenary sessions, apparently arranged for the benefit of garrulous South Americans. We saw more greed and jealousy and compromise than at any time during the war or before it. We had accepted the principles laid

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down in President Wilson's Fourteen Points, and we had thought that peace, based on those principles, would only be a matter of a week or two. But things drifted on from day to day, each delegation becoming more and more national, less and less tolerant and unselfish. And the greatest Peace Conference the world has ever seen reminded one strongly of the quarrelling crowds of beggars who hover around the entrances of the cathedrals of Italy. No, Paris was not all one had hoped it would be.

If President Poincaré keeps a book of press-cuttings, he must have smiled rather sadly once or twice during the Conference over the report of an interview he granted to an American journalist on the last day of 1918, when he declared that 'he did not anticipate that the Peace Conference would have the least trouble in arriving at complete agreement. All the details were already in harmony, and the general lines and details would be settled as soon as the delegates got to work.' As for President Wilson, M. Poincaré said: 'He is bound to play a chief rôle in the Conference, and much

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good may be accomplished by his coming. We appreciate his collaboration, which is most helpful. Many problems remain to be solved, not only in Western Europe, but in the East, the Near East, Africa, and elsewhere. All these will necessarily arise at the Conference, where we hope at least to have your President's assistance in the settlement of principles before his departure.'

And of this same Conference which inspired so much confidence in the heart of the French President, a member of the British delegation said a few weeks later: 'Europe, not Rome, is burning, and here we are fiddling away as even Nero never fiddled.'

CHAPTER II

MR HUGHES SETS THE HOUSE ON FIRE

OF course, it was inevitable, with delegates of so many races present, that the path to peace would not be entirely smooth. Liberia and Panama and Italy and Belgium could not be expected to find the same solution to a problem, and the presence of delegations—unrecognised, it is true, by the Conference—from Finland, Ireland, Persia, Egypt, Georgia, Albania, the Aaland Isles, and Heaven knows how many other places, did not tend to lessen the difficulties. The mild-looking little Sinn Feiner from College Green, sending out open letters to M. Clemenceau from his room in the Grand Hotel, gave a certain amount of worry to the members of the Supreme Council, and I believe that at least two Great Powers had so much to say about Egypt that the British decided to release the Egyptian delegation and to allow it to

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proceed to Paris in consequence. The Albanians were brought by the Italians to annoy the Jugoslavs, and a peasant delegation from Spiss and Orava, demanding to be joined to Poland, helped to embitter the relations between Poland and the Czecho-Slovakia.

Paris, then, was charged with electricity like the air before a thunderstorm. It is an open question whether the somewhat high-handed action of the Great Powers in appointing themselves dictators did not make for far more harm than good. Mr Hymans, the Belgian Foreign Minister, was particularly indignant that only five places were allotted to nineteen nations, and from the moment when M. Clemenceau announced the composition of the various commissions the Belgian delegation became a danger point. The Jugoslavs, too, who needed especially tactful treatment if an amicable solution of their difficulties with Italy was to be reached, were furious that, having suffered proportionately far heavier losses than any Great Power, they were to be given so little to say and their Italian rivals so much.

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That every one would have a chance of stating his views at the plenary sessions gave little comfort, for it was obvious from the first that the plenary sessions were what might be termed 'tragic farces.' Only certain points were to be discussed, and in an entirely perfunctory way. The first plenary session was chiefly remarkable for the rush of curious spectators who managed to get in on the plea that they were journalists and who smashed up the chairs in their anxiety to get a peep at the Salle de l'Horloge and the great little men in it. The second session was uneventful. The third session will be remembered for the infernal heat of the room. At the fourth session most delegates went to sleep and those who did not went into the next room for tea. Mr Balfour leant back and studied the ceiling in the attitude of a man trying to keep awake during a very dull sermon. Mr Lloyd George, always merry and bright, chatted away to M. Clemenceau. Mr Wilson wrote industriously, but for all we know he was working at Limericks, for which he is deservedly famous.

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And so on. A plenary session was interesting for ten minutes, boring for half an hour, and entirely useless to the delegates of the smaller Powers.

Worse still, time and again the Great Four, when they came into existence, deliberately rejected the unanimous recommendation of some commission and came to a completely opposite decision. This was especially the case with the Belgian territorial commission, and the action of the Great Four was not likely to give the Belgians the impression that the other Allies were as grateful to the Belgian Army as they used to say they were in 1914.

The first open trouble occurred over the Prinkipo proposal. The suggestion would never have been made by a Frenchman or an Italian, and it created an enormous amount of hostility. It was presumably an American proposal, but it had the ardent support of Mr Lloyd George, whereas M. Pichon openly mocked at the idea, and said he trusted its failure 'would be a lesson to idealists.' Possibly something might have come of it had

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there not been so many Anti-Bolshevik leaders in Paris at the time. They were able to observe the difference of opinion between Latins and Anglo-Saxons, and unfortunately they did not hesitate to exploit this lack of agreement to their own advantage, thus widening a rift that has at times since then almost looked like a chasm.

And then we come to Mr Hughes, the smallest but the most outspoken of all the delegates at the Peace Conference. If any doubted his wisdom at times none doubted his fearlessness. He will go down to history as the man who caused the first of the many crises that have made the Peace Conference appear a misnomer.

Immediately after the first League of Nations plenary session, when it was urged that Germany's former colonies should be handed over to the League and that the League should appoint nations to have mandates over the different territories, there appeared an article in the Paris *Daily Mail* which was obviously an interview with Mr Hughes, although no name was mentioned. The interview poured scorn on the League of Nations and insisted

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that the mandatory system would mean the 'break-up of the British Empire.'

President Wilson was furious; the first man to beg for open discussions, he was the first man to suffer from them. The meeting of the Supreme Council that morning was a stormy one. It was absolutely impossible, the President opined, to make any sort of a peace if similar statements were permitted to be published. The official interpreter, Lieutenant Mantoux, could hardly translate fast enough to keep Signor Orlando *au courant* of the dispute, and Mr Lloyd George came away with all the wrath of Mr Wilson stored up inside him. He asked the British journalists up to tea at the Majestic, and, having allowed them to eat any number of pleasant little cakes, he proceeded to unload President Wilson's anger and his own on their unhappy heads. Such a statement, he insisted, should never have been published, and when a correspondent of *The Daily Mail* mentioned that it came from one of the Dominions' delegates, the Premier insisted it should have been submitted to him, as head of the British Empire Delegation,

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before printing. He would make sure, he said, that more information should be available, so that correspondents did not have to go to people with axes to grind in order to obtain news.

So every week Mr Lloyd George invited them to tea, and Mr Hughes was put 'in Coventry,' and the Peace Conference pursued the uneven tenor of its way.

CHAPTER III

SOMETHING ABOUT SOMEBODIES

It is generally known that on at least two occasions President Wilson threatened to leave Paris and to call the Conference elsewhere, and he was all the time peculiarly sensitive to newspaper attacks—not altogether without reason, for some of the criticism in the French newspapers was harsh in the extreme, and on occasions he was deliberately insulted. One little example may be given. When the President first arrived in France women belonging to every class of life organised a huge demonstration in his honour and in honour of his Fourteen Points. The great hall of the Trocadero, which accommodates, I believe, 14,000 people, was hired, and a day fixed on which Mr Wilson agreed to attend, and then, when all arrangements were made, the French Minister of the Interior suddenly prohibited the whole demonstration. It was only

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after weeks that, upon the direct request of the President himself, a very small delegation representing the leaders of the French feminist movement was permitted to visit him. And all the trouble was due to the fact that the women openly supported the famous Fourteen Points.

And besides the hostility to his ideas there was no end to the reasons given for dislike or distrust of him personally. He suffered rather because he came from the United States, and the Americans had not succeeded in winning the love of the French. A few American soldiers had talked too much, as though they alone had won the war, and the French, recollecting their own terrible losses, grew almost to dislike the people of the United States, President Wilson included.

President Wilson—without any offence—looks to me rather like a clever, kindly horse. He has a strong handclasp that inspires confidence, and I suppose no one could really doubt his sincerity and high-mindedness although enough people accused him of working only for the increased financial power of the United States. But the chief reason

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for his lack of popularity, especially in France, can best be pointed out in a little anecdote that is told of him when he was Principal of Princeton University. He was unable to persuade his fellow professors to accept some sweeping reform, and, losing patience with them for their stubbornness, he brought his fist down heavily on the table. 'How on earth do you expect me to make this a democratic institution,' he demanded, 'unless I have complete control?'

In Paris he spoke slowly and distinctly, but it was somehow disappointing to hear him speak with an American accent. He was far too frank to appeal to the Latin races, and had his cause too much at heart to beat about the bush. Had he possessed the political tact of Mr Lloyd George, he would have told the Italians that they were the finest fellows on earth before he told them their claims were rather outrageous. Similarly, through no fault of his own, the League of Nations was attributed too much to him. Could he have made out that M. Léon Bourgeois, for example, or M. Briand (who, according to Mr Joseph Clarke Grew, Secre-

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tary General of the American Delegation, declares the scheme owes its inception to him) was the real founder of the League of Nations, the French would have become ardent supporters of it, and their national scepticism would have been directed at some other project.

Mr Wilson looks, and is, an athlete. True, in Paris he confined himself chiefly to walking, but he did as much of that as he possibly could, rather to the alarm of his countrymen who did not like the attitude of the French. After his return from Washington the attempt on M. Clemenceau caused his friends, and especially Admiral Grayson, to insist that he should take certain precautions. At least twenty French policemen were always to be found hovering round the Place des Etats Unis, on which his house gave, and the President gave up his walks. His health and his temper suffered in consequence.

Shortly before the Peace Treaty was handed to the Germans, an old friend of Mr Wilson's told me that he thought the President had aged alarmingly during the Conference. He had worried far more

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than he should on account of the difficulty of keeping the Allies to the Fourteen Points they had accepted as the basis of peace. He was thoroughly depressed by his excursion into the realm of European politics, and he considered he had more or less failed in the supreme task of his life. He was particularly annoyed when people accused him of being inspired by personal ambition, for, as he pointed out to one Frenchman—although he put it more modestly—he was President of the United States, and had no more worlds to conquer.

Incidentally, the disadvantages of being an idealist are many. President Wilson is a far more unhappy man than any one who has not seen his correspondence would suppose—or perhaps his secretaries are the unhappy men. You no longer ask a policeman for assistance. If you are a Sandwich Islander who wants Home Rule, a believer in wearing paper clothes, a worshipper of soot, or an idealist or a crank of any sort or description, you write to President Wilson to help you through.

One day at the Villa Murat, the President's first

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home in Paris, I was shown a few of the letters that had been sent to him during the Conference.

One of the more persistent correspondents was an optimistic gentleman—called Naundorff, if I remember correctly—who appealed to Mr Wilson to put him on the throne of France where, as direct descendant of Louis XVII., he felt that he should be. Another gentleman, an Italian, sent the great American a post card with a picture of Paolo and Francesca embracing on one side and an inscription to the 'Principe della Gloria' (Prince of Glory) on the other. 'Although you have no kingdom,' runs the inscription, 'yet you are supreme in good doctrines and principles. Hail to thee, Wilson, thou modern Aristides !'

Most of the letters were polite and complimentary (or else the nasty ones were carefully concealed). Much the most cheery correspondent was a lady who wrote to the President every day during his visit to Paris. She had no axe to grind; she merely wished to be pleasant and to keep the great man interested. So she sent each day a chatty letter, always commencing in some such way as : Now,

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as you will remember, before we were interrupted yesterday, I was telling you . . .'

Of course, every small nation had something to say—I believe the most prolific correspondents were 'unredeemed Greeks,' and the Irish were very active. Thus there came a letter one day from a certain town in Ireland bewailing the fate of the Irish at the hands of the English and talking about the 'Sinn Fein martyrs.' And by the very same post from the very same town came another letter telling 'His Honour' not to listen to any of the nonsense he heard about Ireland and that 'we have done very little in the war and have lived on the fat of the land all the time.'

The letters of this sort were so numerous that if they had all reached the President himself, his whole day would have been spent in the reading of them. Perhaps the most strange letter of all was one that reached the Villa Murat shortly after the President's arrival in France. The envelope was addressed in a woman's handwriting, and it contained a ten-franc note and a slip of paper with the words: 'Now there will be no more jealousy.'

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And how can you worry about the peace of the world when people send you intriguing letters like that?

The President did much in Paris to endear himself more than ever to his admirers by his accessibility. On one of his busiest days he had twenty-one visitors, representing seventeen different nationalities. In spite of his tremendous amount of work, he found time to discuss the League of Nations and the Russian problem for nearly an hour with Mr George Lansbury, and he listened for as long, at the busiest period of the whole Conference, to a private English gentleman who is interested in Montenegro. The French Government were decidedly upset by the frequency with which he saw M. Jean Longuet and other French Socialists, and it is interesting to note that three or four American officers were to be found chatting in M. Longuet's office any day of the week.

No man aged more during the Conference than M. Clemenceau, and the attempt made on his life by Cottin has had a far greater effect on his health than is generally supposed. His courage at the time

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was marvellous in so old a man, and, although one imagines most of his reported jokes are imaginary, I believe it is a fact that to his doctors he said, as one of the reasons in favour of his early return to work, that he 'did not want to stay in bed long enough to be put on the back page of the newspapers.'

As a result of the attack, M. Clemenceau's mind is said to have lost much of its former elasticity and quickness. The work of the Council of Four was often very delayed by the necessity of repeating things several times to the French Premier before he gathered the meaning of them. Then again, chiefly at his instigation, no records were kept of the work, and often he would repudiate one day agreements that he had concluded the day before. He was forced to give up much of the work he had controlled in earlier days, and the rest of the French delegation was not very capable without the assistance of its leader. I believe at one time the French demand for reparations amounted to one half the total capital wealth of France in 1913, and M. Clemenceau was quite astonished when this was pointed out to him.

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However, Lieutenant Mantoux, the official interpreter told me one day that nothing had astonished him so much during the Conference as the way in which an old man like M. Clemenceau had striven to adapt himself to the new ideas for which President Wilson stood, and that he had made considerable sacrifices to hasten the signing of Peace. And Lieutenant Mantoux is not a man who would be expected to speak unnecessarily in favour of M. Clemenceau, for he is deserting his professorial chair in London for active politics and should shortly, with the assistance of his great friend, M. Albert Thomas, be a Socialist deputy. Incidentally, he is a very extraordinary man, is Professor Mantoux. He will listen to the longest speech and make nothing in the way of notes except a word here and there scribbled down on the pad of blotting paper before him, and then he will get up and repeat the speech in French (or English, as the case may be) without a moment's hesitation, and with every *nuance*. There was only one occasion in which he blundered. Mr Lloyd George had referred to M. Clemenceau as 'France's grand

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young man,' and the interpreter made the mistake of calling the French Premier a 'Great man' in his translation. But M. Clemenceau had protested almost before Professor Mantoux had uttered the words. References to youth were becoming too rare to be rejected like that.

M. Clemenceau is 'very fond of his little joke,' and some one will one day be able to make a book of his sallies. On the day on which the Montenegrin case was to be heard, for example, he walked across the room to M. Dutasta when the previous business was finished. 'Que Montent les Negroes,' was his way of summoning the Montenegrians.

In his day he was famous in the Chamber for his biting wit, and he and his much-hated right-hand man, M. Mandel, still make a formidable couple of opponents. Nevertheless, a Socialist Deputy who had much suffered from the tongue of M. Clemenceau, revenged himself on M. Mandel a few weeks ago to the great joy of others who had no love for him. The Socialist deputy was a member of a delegation that had come to see M.

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Clemenceau in his room in the Ministry of War, and had been confronted by M. Mandel, who explained with much haughtiness that the Premier was otherwise engaged and could not keep the appointment. He asked the members of the delegation their business and thoroughly annoyed them all by his overbearing manner. So, when they were filing out of the room, the Socialist deputy said, perhaps a trifle too loudly, to a friend : 'They promised us we should see a Tiger, and they show us a monkey. Let's ask for our money back.'

While we are on the subject, and in order that any American who chances to read this little book may not think his President is unfairly treated because it is suggested that he has a face like a horse, it might be mentioned that by daylight M. Clemenceau has the profile of an ape, and that in the dusk he looks far more like a walrus than Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill' ever did.

M. Clemenceau's second in command, M. Pichon, is superficially an unattractive personality. He took a savage joy in deceiving curious journalists

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who came to see him every Sunday morning (until the Council of Four tried to stop any one getting any news at all) and when they got him into a corner he would always escape by saying that *la question n'a pas encore été envisagée*, or by professing that he could say nothing without the consent of his colleagues. There was one occasion, however, when he was really funny. He was being badly heckled by the Socialists in the Chamber over the Russian question, and whenever he was particularly annoyed he threw his hands up above his head in his usual gesture of disdain. And then some one had a brilliant idea. Every time M. Pichon performed his little trick, the whole of the Left of the Chamber would shout out, 'Kamerad,' so that towards the end of the debate M. Pichon's arms would start up, then stop suddenly, then commence to go up again to express their owner's annoyance, then fall, until one could have sworn that they were worked by erratic and rusty clock-work.

But if there is nothing particularly interesting about M. Pichon, the same cannot be said of Marshal

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Foch. He is not, it is true, a straight big man such as one always expects famous generals to be and such as they seldom are. Indeed he is altogether unimposing, and therefore all the more interesting as a man, for one is astounded to think such a simple-looking, kindly, little fellow will be read of with awe by boys in schools five hundred years hence. He is decidedly bow-legged and has a wrinkled, good-humoured face that makes one think of a good-natured, simple peasant. Simplicity seems to be the keynote of the whole man. On the occasion of a luncheon given at the Senate to President Wilson, it was amusing to see him walking up and down the room arm in arm with another old gentleman to whom he was saying that '*il se portait comme le Pont Neuf.*' And he was clearly embarrassed but also childishly pleased when the Senators surrounded him to pat him respectfully on the back and to tell him what a great man he was, while he in turn told them, half modestly, half boyishly proud, of the way in which he had handed the armistice terms to the Germans with instructions that they must sign them within

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twenty-four hours unless they wished every Allied gun to open fire on their lines.

Another time, at the reception given at the British Embassy in honour of the Prince of Wales, the Marshal clearly wished for the time that he had not had so much greatness thrust upon him, for he was surrounded by ladies whose compliments were apparently far more embarrassing than those of mere men. The Prince of Wales, of course, attracted the greatest attention, but General Pershing, who has a widespread reputation as a woman-killer, was almost deserted in comparison with the crowd that surrounded the Generalissimo.

There was a strong feeling in certain quarters that Marshal Foch had too much to say in the making of the peace. In the opinion of one of the leading members of the British delegation, no one did more—unconsciously, of course—to delay the drafting of the Treaty, than the Generalissimo, for he often demanded action which was in entire disagreement with the principles which the Allies were trying to follow. It was maintained that he was a soldier and not a politician, that soldiers made

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war, that politicians made, or should make, peace, and that when a soldier played at politics or a politician at military tactics the result was chaos. The Marshal was far too direct and plain a man to appreciate the somewhat complicated methods of diplomacy, and he soon began to lose patience with them. He was particularly annoyed by the foundation of the Supreme Economic Council, which, of necessity, robbed him of much of his power.

A chapter on 'Somebodies' would appear incomplete without a word on Signor Orlando—the British 'somebodies' will have a chapter to themselves. But until the time came for the departure of the Italian delegates, Signor Orlando played a relatively inconspicuous part in the proceedings. He was looked on as the shadow of M. Clemenceau. Indeed, it was said that on certain occasions when Lieutenant Mantoux was not present at the meetings of the Council of Four proceedings were carried on entirely in English, and M. Clemenceau did not even trouble to trans-

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late for the benefit of the Italian Premier, so sure was he of his support and approval.

Signor Orlando is as voluble as men of his race proverbially are. On one occasion in 1917 when, as Minister of the Interior, he came to England on business, I went to see him at his room in the Ritz, as I wanted a statement of some two hundred words from him. He promised to be very brief, but when I called back less than an hour later he had already dictated eleven pages, and was only just 'getting into his stride.' His appearance was somewhat remarkable, for he wore a morning coat and trousers, brown boots, and the brightest Cambridge blue tie I have ever seen.

A word about Signor Orlando calls for one about his rival, Dr Pachitch. The more serious opponent for the Italians was undoubtedly the stiff, Prussian-looking Dr Trumbitch, but Dr Pachitch made a splendid figure-head for any delegation. The fine, benevolent face, the way in which he takes your hand between his two hands as he talks to you, like an old father to his son, would disarm all your

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suspicious even though you had heard unsavoury, but probably untrue, stories of the way in which he is supposed to have sent officer after officer to his death as a punishment for a riot at Salonika. His benevolence is the benevolence of a bishop—quite unlike the benevolence of his greater colleague, M. Venizelos, whose benevolence is that of a professor of biology or philosophy—and, if you can understand what he says, for he speaks no English and only the most indifferent French with an aggravating *Comment ça* placed between every two or three words, you will find that he can still be amusing.

Shortly after the armistice with Bulgaria had been signed, he told me, though in more diplomatic and hence much less clear language—the sort of peace he wanted with the Bulgarians. The following is the gist: 'We want a peace such as President Wilson stands for. We bear no feelings of enmity towards those Bulgarian swine now. We want nothing from them, only we must take a strip of their territory along our present frontier in order to guard our railway. We are willing to forgive and forget, but the devils are taking loot

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with them as they evacuate Serbia, and we shall give them Hell when we get hold of them.'

When Dr Pachitch was in London in 1917 he attended a great meeting at Queen's Hall at which Mr Lloyd George and Baron Sonnino both spoke. The (then) Serbian Prime Minister was almost unknown to British people, but there was a little perfunctory applause when he came in to take his seat. Then, when Mr Lloyd George and Baron Sonnino and others arrived, the applause became louder, upon which Dr Pachitch rose and bowed with a delighted smile. And every time during the meeting that there was an outburst of clapping the old gentleman responded with a bow. Dr Koich, his private secretary, who has just been appointed Minister of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in London, told me the next day that Dr Pachitch had never been so pleased before as he was with the welcome given him at Queen's Hall.

The difficulties of language, by the way, have had no small effect on certain articles of the Peace Treaty, and we may expect the believers in Esperanto

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to carry on their propaganda with renewed energy now. Many a decision would have been modified or strengthened had not delegates grown bored by the slowness with which everything proceeded owing to the necessity for translations. At least one interpreter consistently gave faulty translations, on account of his ignorance of the language, to the unfortunates who depended upon him. M. Tardieu knew much more English than the officer who was supposed to interpret for him. And in several Commissions where it was agreed to carry on the debates in French, the English and American members discovered they had been too confident of their powers as linguists, and were only able to understand about half of what was being said, while the other members had further proofs of the proverbial silence of the Anglo-Saxon.

When the Germans arrived the situation became unbearable, and it would clearly have been impossible to carry on any real negotiations with them, as no delegate on earth could have listened enthusiastically to a debate, every word of which was spoken in three languages.

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As the various plenipotentiaries filed out of the dining hall of the Foreign Office after a plenary session, one was able to conjure up a rather terrifying picture of the Capital of the League of Nations on a Bank Holiday.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH DELEGATION

MR LLOYD GEORGE was, thanks to circumstances, the most powerful plenipotentiary at the Peace Conference.

On the one side was the United States, generally supported by Japan; on the other side was France, supported by Italy, and in between Mr Lloyd George was able to hop about capriciously weighing down the balance on which ever side he preferred.

It was a great opportunity, and one would say that the Prime Minister proved himself worthy of the occasion. It was, of course, a matter of opinion whether the ideas of M. Clemenceau or those of Mr Wilson were the more likely to lead to lasting peace, but even whole-hearted supporters of the French policy must needs admit that their Governments did agree to base the peace upon the Fourteen Points, and, in doing what he could to

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keep those principles in view, Mr Lloyd George would seem to have rendered great service to the Allies. Had he but possessed the dogged honesty of Mr Wilson, he would probably have been one of the greatest men the world has ever seen, for he had any amount of tact and plausibility. It was amusing to see him posing as an artist with his glasses dangling to a broad black silk ribbon, his great mane of hair (which is one of his greatest assets), and his velvet dinner jacket which had a *succès fou* at the Hotel Majestic when he wore it at dances or little plays there. His most useful qualities (which is, perhaps, hardly the right word) were his democratic *bonhomie* which put his critics in a good humour in spite of themselves, and his coolness and apparent frankness when he said what he knew was not quite true.

This last asset has got him into trouble on several occasions. Thus, his wild promises during the Election campaign about 'making Germany pay' were, he decided later, impossible of realisation, and he began to climb down. How far he would have gone had not Lord Northcliffe been

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watching him very closely from Fontainebleau, there is no means of knowing, but it is pretty certain that the interview with 'a high authority' in the *Westminster Gazette*, in which Germany's inability to pay was announced, emanated from him or from Mr Philip Kerr, his private secretary. Owing to the criticism in the Northcliffe Press, Mr Lloyd George was compelled to reiterate his election promises when he came to speak in the House of Commons on February 16th, and from that date he 'stiffened up.'

An even more serious inconsistency occurred in the same speech when the Premier said : 'We have had no approach of any sort (from Russia). I have heard reports of others having proposals which they assume have come from authentic quarters, but those have never been put before the Peace Conference by any member, and therefore we have not considered them.'

And yet Mr Lloyd George had asked Mr Bullitt, one of the two members of the American Peace Delegation who went to Russia, to breakfast only a few days before, and had shown the greatest

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interest in Lenin's *démarches* for peace. Bullitt, who was one of the most favoured of the younger men working under the United States Foreign Secretary, had gone to Moscow and Petrograd on a semi-official mission from the United States Government, and it is said that Mr Lloyd George knew all about the trip before it even took place. Bullitt and Lincoln Steffens, who accompanied him, were only in Russia for five days, but they met Lenin, Radek, Trotsky, Tchicherin, and most of the other Bolshevik leaders, as also the moving spirits of other political movements in Russia. Although Mr Lloyd George was technically right in denying that they had brought back with them direct peace proposals from Lenin, he knew all the while that they were in possession of a document signed by Lenin laying down the conditions upon which he would be willing to accept peace if it were offered. The conditions included a retirement on the part of the Bolsheviks from any territory in dispute on the condition that Allied troops, if there were any, should follow suit so that the territory in question could freely decide its own

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future, the complete independence of any part of Russia which showed by plebiscite taken under fair conditions that it was not satisfied with the Bolshevik régime; and the cessation of propaganda abroad in so far as the Bolshevik Government could stop it. Lastly, there were offers of numerous important commercial concessions to the Allies, and the promise that all debts contracted under the Tsar's Government should be recognised and paid off.

Mr Lloyd George was well aware of the existence of these documents, and his failure to make any mention of them in the House of Commons gave rise to much discussion in Paris. Throughout the Conference, Mr Lloyd George appeared to be inclining towards the Left, and, just as M. Briand has been seeking favour with the Socialists in the hope of obtaining their support in case he should succeed M. Clemenceau, so also Mr Lloyd George had several Labour and Socialist leaders to breakfast at his flat in the Rue Nitot without, one would imagine, the entire approval of some of the extreme members of his Tory Coalition. It was probably

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a very wise thing to do as far as the Peace Conference was concerned, but many Labour men who were formerly his friends refuse to be reconciled with him again on account of his attacks on them at the Election.

By the way, the day before the Prime Minister's speech the staff of the Peace Conference Secretariat was very busy with its history books; Mr Lloyd George wanted to know all about the duration of other peace conferences, such as the Congresses of Vienna and of Brussels, so that he might make an effective comparison in his speech between their duration and the duration of the Paris Conference. Some six dates were hunted up for him, but apparently the contrasts in duration were not sufficiently striking, for when the time came he never used them. Or perhaps his prolonged attack on Lord Northcliffe left him no time to do so.

An interesting incident that took place during the Conference was caused by Mr Winston Churchill's little 'plan' to solve the Russian problem. After the failure of the Prinkipo proposal, and while Mr Lloyd George was still in England, the Minister

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for War arrived in Paris on February 18th with his much-advertised scheme. It was discussed by the Council of Ten, and in the end it turned out to be the old, old plan of intervention on a huge scale. He telegraphed to the Prime Minister for support, and he received a reply that was nothing less than a severe snub. Firstly, he was informed, the scheme was entirely impracticable. The British Army could scarcely be expected to greet with any enthusiasm the commencement of another great war. British finance would be entirely unable to support it, and Winston was urged not to get such ideas into his head, and not to listen to people who propounded them and who were not always quite to be trusted.

The matter dropped for the time, but Mr Churchill came back to the charge at the end of April, when he sent the Prime Minister a telegram from London about it. The Finns, he had learnt from Mr Clement Edwards and others, were almost certain to capture Petrograd. Here was our opportunity. Let us have warships and foodships ready to proceed to Petrograd when the Finns took the city, and

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then, chiefly by distributing food wisely, we could win over the people from Bolshevism. Should the Finns fail in their plans we were not compromised at all, and nothing more need be said about it.

Mr Lloyd George's answer was apparently in favour of the scheme, for within a few weeks of Mr Churchill's telegram there came the official recognition of Finland—for which, according to M. Pichon, the French had been anxious for months—and the open support of the Finnish advance into Russia and the action taken by our fleet in the Baltic.

Mention must be made of the Prime Minister's close friend and ardent supporter, Sir George Riddell, who, although not officially a member of the British delegation, was appointed by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association to act as connecting link between the delegation and the British newspaper correspondents. Happily, Sir George is too good-natured to mind a joke against himself, and will therefore forgive me for recounting a little incident connected with the Queen of

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Rumania. The Queen had expressed a desire to meet British and American journalists in her suite at the Ritz Hotel, and Sir George acted as Master of Ceremonies, presenting the correspondents one by one. And then the Queen began to tell of the miseries of her people. They were all starving, and, while it was hardly true that men and women were actually falling down dead in the streets, it was certainly a fact that they often fainted for want of food. Sir George saw the opportunity of a compliment, or what was meant for a compliment. 'Well, if I might say so, your Majesty, he remarked, '*you* don't look as though you had been starved.' Which was perfectly true, but rather unfortunate. The Queen of Rumania was obviously embarrassed, but only for a moment. 'Oh, no, I always had plenty to eat,' she said, and then changed the subject. She was also given a little lesson in democratic manners by an American journalist, who, with one hand in his pocket, greeted her with—'My name's So-and-so. Glad to know you.'

Sir George Riddell, unlike his colleague Mr G. H.

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Mair, who knows more about foreign politics than many a Foreign Minister, was frank in his confession that in a long and busy life he had had very little time for international affairs. On one occasion, near the beginning of the Conference, the name of Dr Trumbitch came up in a conversation. 'Trumbitch?' said Sir George, 'who's Trumbitch? Is he a Pole or a Czech or a Russian, or what? "Itch" sounds like Russian, doesn't it?' And he could never be quite sure about Czechoslavs and Jugo-Slovaks.

For sheer popularity General Smuts would be difficult to beat—his only serious rivals are Lord Robert Cecil and the Maharajah of Bikanir—although the French found plenty of unpleasant things to say about him when he was chosen to go to Hungary on behalf of the Allies. The French were very indignant that General Mangin was supplanted, but the decision to send General Smuts instead would appear to have been a wise one if, as it was suggested, General Mangin would have acted in the same way as General Franchet d'Esperey, who seems to have gained

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in the various Balkan and Central European States he visited an unpopularity approaching that which Von Bissing won and merited in Belgium.

Not that General Smuts was in any way friendly towards the Hungarians. Before he reached Buda-Pesth he took off his 'mufti' and donned his uniform as a little reminder to the nation that it was conquered. He interviewed Bela Kuhn in the train, and, in fact, never left the train the whole time it was in Buda Pesth, although some of his subordinates went about the town in creaky motor-cars placed at their disposal by the Hungarian Government. The interview with Bela Kuhn was brief in the extreme. The Bolshevik Minister tried again and again to divert the conversation from the question of the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier, for which General Smuts had been sent, into more interesting channels. But the Boer General would have none of it, and Bela Kuhn had to retire and content himself by writing a long note, which, incidentally, was never answered.

In Vienna one of the General's visitors was that

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same Count Von Mensdorff who had met him in Switzerland in 1918 when General Smuts was sent to try to make a separate peace with Austria. Von Mensdorff, who is now a relatively unimportant official in the Austrian Foreign Office, reminded General Smuts jokingly of their meeting during the war, but a delegate who went to Buda Pesth with General Smuts told me that Von Mensdorff obviously laughed *pour ne pas en pleurer*. Certainly he must, from personal as well as patriotic motives, regret bitterly that he did not seize the opportunity he had then of making a separate peace for Austria with the Allies.

General Smuts nearly suffered the same pangs of hunger as the people he went to visit. On his train were rations only for a week, and shortly before his return to Paris he and his party gave away nearly all the remaining provisions to poor persons in Vienna, where the food situation was appalling. It was only then that they discovered that the Oriental Express, to which their carriages were to be attached, was over twenty-four hours late. Fortunately they managed to hitch

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themselves on to the special train of an Austrian Archduke, who was making for Switzerland with all his belongings, and, with the help of the few tins of bully beef that remained of their rations, General Smuts and his small party arrived back in Paris very hungry but quite well. I understand that his report of the conditions in the countries that once formed the Austrian Empire was such as to spur on the Allies to unprecedented efforts to send food to the starving population, and justified the gloomy prognostication of Mr Hoover, who had gained an undeserved reputation for pessimism.

The question of raising the blockade was one which gave the Allies endless worry, and their lack of decisions was at times lamentable. Before the middle of February, the American Blockade Committee had proposed a drastic relaxation of the blockade for three reasons. Firstly on humanitarian grounds; secondly, because they had considerable stores of food waiting to be taken into the Central Empires and which were in danger of being wasted; and thirdly, because of the increasing danger of a serious Spartacus outbreak

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which was timed for about the seventh of April, and which would be encouraged by starvation.

France, the chief opponent to any relaxation of the blockade, objected not for motives of revenge, but because she feared to lose her indemnity. It was obvious that Germany must pay at once for any food she had, and every penny she paid meant a penny taken away from the money she had available for reparations and indemnities. Similarly, the French objected most strongly against any proposition to allow Germany raw materials, at any rate while French factories were still in ruins. And to this very natural and logical claim they added another which caused a deadlock. The Germans, they insisted, must at once pay a huge indemnity, and, of course, to do so they must have raw materials. These two diametrically opposed arguments must have delayed the peace for at least a fortnight.

The two factors which, after the report from General Smuts, had the greatest influence on the Allies were firstly, a letter from General Plumer pointing out how the soldiers in the occupied zone

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were influenced by the sight of women and children on the verge of starvation; and secondly, a long report from a British captain in Berlin, who gave a vivid account of the scarcity in Germany and of the activities of the Independent Socialists, who were thought to be more than powerful enough to defeat the German Government and Noske's handful of soldiers, while there were signs that all the better classes were in favour of throwing in their lot with Bolshevism rather than give up everything to the Allies.

Of Mr Balfour there is little to be said. He was content to take a back seat, and he probably had less to say than any other important Foreign Minister. It was obvious that he would not long postpone his retirement from public life. On one occasion only did he come into the limelight, and then not entirely to his credit. While the Prime Minister was in England, Marshal Foch suddenly came forward with the demand that the preliminary peace terms should be ready within a fortnight, in order to have peace signed before April 1st. This, it was pointed out, might lessen the danger

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of the expected Spartacus *coup d'état* in Germany, and would also leave the Allies free to do as they thought fit in Russia. Mr Wilson was away, Mr Lloyd George was away, and the burden of any decision fell upon Mr Balfour, for nothing could be done without the consent of the Anglo-Saxons. And Mr Balfour hesitated. Nothing must be done with precipitation, he opined, or while the President and the British Prime Minister were away. His chief fear was that the work of the Conference was proceeding too rapidly as it was, that great decisions were being taken without sufficient consideration, and he confessed that he was not a partisan of the 'speeding up' policy.

So the preliminary peace was not signed by April 1st, nor by May 1st, nor even by June 1st, and if the German Government was not overthrown it probably considers it owes no great thanks to Mr Balfour, who, by the way, attracted a great amount of attention in Paris, and was undoubtedly the best specimen of diplomat, in the old sense of the word, at the Conference. Cultured, good-looking, blue-blooded, and with red tape hanging

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out of every pocket. The French, however, were very disappointed that he did not wear the conventional tall hat, but had a felt hat perched jauntily on the back of his head. The people who displayed the top hat on every occasion were just the people whom one would not suspect of favouring such old-world headgear—Mr Wilson and his compatriots, while a silk hat box was an important part of Count Brockdorff Rantzau's luggage.

Lord Robert Cecil, on the other hand, played a very conspicuous part, and his zealous work for the League of Nations was peculiarly suitable to a man who looks like an ascetic monk. His popularity rivalled that of General Smuts, and his hard work was probably only equalled by that of Mr J. W. Headlam Morley, who, in his quiet way, had a finger in every pie, or in as many pies as he had fingers.

The British Delegation must have taken, or should have taken, a very important part on all questions to do with food, and with the Supreme Economic Council, for it had Sir William Wise and Sir William Goode as its representatives.

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A very famous Government official spent his leisure making up a little rhyme about them when they were connected in the Ministry of Food.

‘What special virtues signalise
The Ministry of Food,
Whose representative is Wise,
Whose counsellor is Goode?’

Apparently the official in question must have had a lot of leisure, for he also composed a Latin version, and I am not sure he did not try his hand at Greek.

Finally, if any one wants more intimate details as to the British Delegation, it may interest them to know that Lord Robert Cecil suffers severely from cold feet, and was unable for some days to work in his office at the Hotel Astoria because the Central Heating was out of order; Mr Balfour still plays an extraordinarily good game of tennis for his age; Mr Massey wears the dirtiest cuffs, and Mr Headlam Morley, when he goes to the country, wears the shortest, tightest, lightest pair

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of gray trousers that could be well imagined; and Admiral Beattie is as theatrical in his gestures and his hair as Mr Martin Harvey. No living British actor could have come down a staircase so successfully as did Admiral Beattie after the dinner given by the French Navy to the British Fleet at the Hotel Continental.

Sir William Orpen, R.A., should know as much about the Peace delegates as any one, for there are few important people he has not painted, and a portrait painter, he assures me, gets to know the character of his sitters just as surely as a doctor or a dentist knows that of his patients. He gets them off their guard, so to speak.

His one failure was M. Clemenceau, who refused to be caught although Sir William had pursued him for a year. The best sitter was undoubtedly the Emir Feisul, who could be as motionless as any human being can be, and for as long a time. He took a huge interest in his portrait, and had a habit of popping his head round suddenly to see how it was progressing, but he was always able to find the same pose again without any difficulty.

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Brigadier-General Carton de Wiart, who sat for Sir William after his return from Poland, was a good second to the Emir, and Lord Cunliffe was 'placed.'

Sir William, who was given a rather indifferent room as a studio on the ground floor of the Astoria—because, as he explained, his sitters were either too busy or too important or both to go upstairs—has done, or is doing, three group paintings to commemorate the Conference. We have the Conference Room in the Foreign Office, with M. Clemenceau, President Wilson and his other American colleagues, Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues, all seated at the head of the horse-shoe table; then there is the scene at the Trianon Palace Hotel, when the peace terms were handed to the Germans; and lastly there are a number of delegates walking up and down one of the rooms in the Foreign Office, so that every one of importance has a chance of appearing somewhere or other on one of the three canvasses. And, once their portraits have thus been painted for the benefit of posterity, they will probably get the idea that the

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Peace Conference was a success. Major Augustus John, of course, confined himself to impressions, so that the people of no importance may be able to discover imaginary resemblances between themselves and the indistinct figures of his pictures, and will take their grandchildren up to London to show them their portraits at the Peace Conference.

CHAPTER V

STRETCHING THE POINTS

As soon as the Conference began, it was obvious that it had two aims that were absolutely impossible to reconcile. There were two distinct parties—those who believed in knock-out blows, and those who believed in winning on points, the famous Fourteen Points.

Rightly or wrongly, all the Allies accepted these Fourteen Points with certain reservations. Thus Italy naturally had something to say about her frontiers with Jugoslavia, and Great Britain had her own opinion about the freedom of the seas, and, with France, about reparations. These reservations were agreed to, and we all came running along to Paris to settle the peace. The British installed a little Britain near the Arc de Triomphe; the Italians, for some reason, settled down at the Hotel Edouard VII.—were things to begin again

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they would probably prefer to have a little less to do with Great Britain, who, according to their papers, at one stage of the Conference, was blind, treacherous, and all sorts of other things; the Japanese worked at the Hotel Bristol, while many members of the delegation lived in the Hotel Lutétia, where were to be found their bitter foes, the Chinese; the Americans, appropriately enough, placed themselves in the Hotel Crillon, overlooking the Place de la Concorde; and the other delegations crowded in wherever they could, and in such numbers that prices doubled in less than two months.

And having locked ourselves in our little extra-territorial spots, we set about making peace, based on the Fourteen Points.

Even the Americans themselves found there were awkward Points, when it came to putting them into practice. But they, at any rate, did try to reconcile things, and did not try to stretch a point so that it would cover an entire secret treaty. It is significant that the arguments and actions of the American delegation were almost exactly

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similar to the arguments of the British Labour Party, and the French Socialist Party, and it is very doubtful if, in the long run, these two organisations would have escaped without compromising their ideals quite as much as the Americans did, had they been in their place. The left wings would have broken away, but so they have done in the case of the American delegation. It was stated again and again in Paris that Messrs Bullitt, Young, Bowman, and others had only gone home to report, but the following letter to President Wilson should be definite enough to please any one, and if it is quoted at length it is only because, for so young a man, Bullitt had enormous influence in American Government circles, and was especially favoured by Mr Wilson himself.

‘MY DEAR MR PRESIDENT,—I have submitted to-day to the Secretary of State my resignation as assistant of the Department of State attached to the American Commission to negotiate peace. I was one of the millions who trusted confidently and implicitly your leadership, and believed you

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would take nothing less than a permanent peace based upon "unselfish and unbiased justice."

'But our Government has consented now to deliver the suffering peoples of the world to new oppressions, subjections, and dismemberments—a new century of war.

'And I can convince myself no longer that effective labour for "a new world order" is possible as a servant of this Government.

'Russia—the acid test of goodwill for me as for you—has not even been understood. The unjust decisions of the Conference in regard to Shantung, the Tyrol, Thrace, Hungary, East Prussia, Danzig, and Saar Valley, and the abandonment of the principle of the freedom of the seas, make new international conflicts certain. It is my conviction that the present League of Nations will be powerless to prevent these wars, and that the United States will be involved in them by obligations undertaken in the Covenant of the League and the special understanding with France. Therefore, the duty of the Government of the United States to its own people and to mankind

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is to refuse to sign or ratify this unjust Treaty, to refuse to guarantee its settlements by entering the League of Nations, to refuse to entangle the United States further by an understanding with France. That you are personally opposed to most of the unjust settlements, and that you accepted them only under great pressure, is well known. Nevertheless, it is my conviction that if you had made your fight in the open instead of behind closed doors, you would have carried with you the public opinion of the world, which was yours. You would have been able to resist the pressure, and might have established that "new international order based upon broad and universal principles of Right and Justice," of which you used to speak.

'I am sorry you did not fight our fight to a finish, and that you had so little faith in the millions of men like myself in every nation who had faith in you.

'Very sincerely yours,

'WILLIAM C. BULLITT.'

The Point the British did not like was that

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which stated that German Colonies should be controlled by the League of Nations. (The 'freedom of the seas,' as far as any one not directly connected with the Council of Ten or the Council of Four could tell, hardly came up for discussion at all.) Mr Hughes, supported with varying warmth by the British and other Dominion representatives, was not shy in letting us know what he thought about things, and as Japan had her eye on the Pacific Islands, France on parts of the Turkish Empire, Italy on Adalia and anything she could get, and all the other Allies were after territory in Europe or elsewhere, the Americans could not hold out.

But appearances had to be kept up somehow. We must pretend to hold to the Fourteen Points. So some bright gentleman, apparently Mr Wilson himself, thought of the mandatory system. That the British never for a moment interpreted the Fourteen Points in the same way as President Wilson was shown by the outcry when a news agency announced that the British delegation was willing to hand over to the League of Nations for

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settlement all questions in dispute as to territory, such as the German Colonies, Mesopotamia, and Palestine.

Even the mandatory system did not at first meet with the approval of delegates who were 'out for' territory, and Mr Hughes, it will be recollected, asserted that it meant the break-up of the British Empire. It was only when the Great Five, or four of them, began giving themselves mandates under the League of Nations even before the unfortunate League was in existence, that the delegates began to be reconciled. And even at this moment, they are amusing themselves by cutting up the former Turkish Empire with a wonderful disregard for the League and a still more wonderful disregard for the 'no annexations' agreement. There are no annexations made if you, acting on behalf of a League of Nations, give yourself a mandate.

The Point that particularly annoyed France, as well as most of the other Allies, was the one prohibiting annexations and punitive indemnities, for she was decided to have possession of the Saar

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Valley, and it had not then been settled that war pensions and the other less direct costs of the war could be brought under the blessed title of 'reparations.' Symptomatic of the development of the Conference is the fact that for the first two months the word 'indemnities' was quite out of order, whereas during the last two, when the Fourteen Points were conveniently thrust away out of mind, people managed to forget that there was any difference at all between 'indemnities' and 'reparations.'

France's claim to the Saar Valley was, of course, based on the Secret Treaty of February, 1917, by which, on condition that Russia was to be allowed to do exactly what she liked with Poland, the Russian Government agreed to the Western frontiers of Germany being drawn up 'at the discretion of the French Government, so as to provide for the strategical needs and for the inclusion in French territory . . . of the entire coal district of the Saar Valley.' It became obvious after a very few hours of peace talk that either the Fourteen Points or this Secret Treaty together

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with the demand for the Saar Valley would have to go. The Secret Treaty went—we heard no more about it—but the demand for the Saar Valley remained, in a slightly disguised form. A pathetic picture was drawn of the necessity of the Saar coal to work the Lorraine iron, and it was said that the arguments so affected President Wilson that he himself became one of the most ardent supporters of the French demands.

The French refused to annex the Saar Basin outright. At a meeting of the Committee to deal with the problem, one member suggested this downright solution, but M. Tardieu, the French representative, declined. It was simpler for France to call in the phantom aid of the League of Nations and to make arrangements that would doubtless give her entire ownership of the district after fifteen years. Besides, most of the Allied plenipotentiaries still liked to make some show of maintaining the Fourteen Points.

A Secret Treaty made shortly after the French Secret Treaty, gave Southern Mesopotamia with Bagdad to Great Britain, and agreed that the

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'neutral' zone of Persia was to be included in 'the British sphere of influence.' Great Britain has appointed herself mandatory over Mesopotamia. The same treaty gave Syria to the French, and the French have given themselves the League of Nations mandate over Syria, although not without difficulty on account of the claims of the King of the Hedjaz.

In fact, the Emir Feisul created no end of difficulty. He would not hear of a French mandate for his father's country, and especially for the city of Damascus, and he appealed to the British for support. The French were determined to have Syria, and they appealed to the British for support. And the British began to feel uncomfortable. The Emir Feisul had unbounded faith in the British, and, thanks to Colonel Lawrence—a quiet young fellow with what the novelists call 'steady, piercing eyes,' and mauve socks—the King of the Hedjaz was only too willing to accept Great Britain as mandatory power over his people, if mandatory power there was to be. The British wanted the friendship of the King of the Hedjaz very badly,

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but they wanted still more the rich territories of Mesopotamia. They could not have both, for they certainly could not oust the French out of Syria and themselves maintain their hold on Mesopotamia. An old gentleman named Chekri Ganem, who had not been in Syria for, if I remember rightly, over twenty years, was produced to give evidence in February to the effect that Syria was not fit for self-government. . . .

In the end, after the usual efforts at compromise, Great Britain chose the Garden of Eden and the Emir Feisul left France in disgust, declaring that if the Peace Conference would not defend the rights of his people, they would fight for them.

The Emir Feisul was one of the few men who ventured to indulge in repartee with M. Clemenceau. He was being questioned one day by the Great Four, and the French Premier referred to his father's financial affairs. 'Has not the King of the Hedjaz received financial aid from the British during the war?' he asked.

'Oh, yes,' answered the Emir Feisul cheerily, 'to the extent of several thousands of pound's.

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'Don't you think that is rather irregular?' inquired M. Clemenceau.

'Has not France received financial aid from the British during the war?' asked the Emir Feisul.

'Don't you think that is irregular?' he pursued, when M. Clemenceau had to confess that France owed Great Britain many millions.

So Great Britain obtained her Mesopotamia, France her Syria, and Italy her Adalia, all from the benevolent League of Nations, and it was still possible to pretend that the Fourteen Points had not been definitely sacrificed. But when it came to 'self determination of peoples,' the Allies were compelled to throw the Fourteen Points to the winds. They were useless—they couldn't be stretched any more. And Poland did her best to help us in the game of throwing things to the winds.

The new state of Poland had to have its outlet on the sea, and, although the new State of Czecho-Slovakia has not much in the way of outlets on the sea, the Poles demanded, with some show of reason that Danzig should become Gdansk again,

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and should be handed over to them. The experts on internationalisation got busy and wanted to make it an international port connected with Poland by an international railway, and any one who had hoped that he would be made a member of the staff of the League of Nations must have trembled in his shoes at the idea of keeping peace on an international railway that carried Polish traffic in large quantities through Germany.

But M. Roman Dmowski, the principal Polish delegate until the arrival of M. Paderewski, was a gentleman of imperialist designs, and he demanded the famous 'corridor' which should make the territory on each side of the railway Polish. The French, moved by the desire of creating a barrier against Bolshevism, gave him their ardent support, and the 'corridor' grew in breadth as rapidly as a fisherman's trout does when he tells you about it in his club.

An international 'corridor' was suggested, probably by those who would have had nothing to do with its maintenance, and when the Polish proposals had grown to such an extent that they

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wanted most of West Prussia, the British, who had hitherto had the Americans with them in opposition, were suddenly deserted—the Americans began to support the Polish demands. The Kingdom of Poland used to extend over West Prussia, they argued, therefore the territory is Polish. In vain the more facetious pointed out that on those grounds the Red Indians had every right to demand that the United States was theirs and had nothing to do with Mr Wilson and his Government, or that the Spanish might very well demand possession of the Netherlands again, seeing that you can still find in the poorer quarters of Antwerp and other cities of the Low Countries, fishermen and fisherwomen with fine-sounding Spanish names.

No, the majority was on the side of the Poles. The artistic world, of course, began to support M. Paderewski, the lovers of the picturesque became pro-Polish, converted by peasants in strange dress who came from the provinces of Spiss and Orava, to say that they wanted to have nothing to do with Czecho-Slovakia but were entirely Polish, the sentimental were much impressed by

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tales of the oppression of Poles in Danzig, and of their trust and hope in the Conference. The ordinary individual was so overwhelmed by propagandist literature that he became a supporter of the Poles by a kind of *force majeure*, an overwhelming of words and sentences. On one occasion I went to a dinner given by the Polish delegation. The food and wines were almost too good to be true, but every guest was placed between two Polish gentlemen, mostly long-bearded, who spent most of the evening recounting the depressing oppressions of the Germans, the Russians, or the Czecho-Slovaks. Personally, I escaped with (a) one very fine atlas of Poland, showing me, amongst other things, where the birthrate was highest, where most horses were bred, where were the forests, the corn lands, the finest pastures, and everything else I could wish to know about Poland; (b) a splendid book called *Danzig*; (c) a pamphlet, 'The Poles and the Peace Conference,' and seven more booklets or pamphlets of one kind and another.

So it was decided that two million Germans

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must be cut off from Germany, and that such entirely German towns as Bromberg and Schneidemühl, where there were minute Polish quarters, and Zoppot, where fat German ladies and gentlemen were wont to wallow in the waves, should become part of Poland. Mr Lloyd George protested until he was hoarse, and until the Poles hated his name, against the creation of a Germania Irredenta, as the cause of future wars, but without avail. Mr Headlam Morley, British member of the Polish Commission, proposed that one of the two main railways, preferably that running through Marienwerder, should be left in German hands, so as to connect Germany with East Prussia. By this means a German official would climb into the train in Berlin and only leave it at Königsberg, and only see German porters and red-capped German station-masters on the way. But it was argued, and possibly with reason, that it would be even more difficult to maintain a German railway in Poland than a Polish railway in Germany, and the Polish 'corridor' was included in the Peace Treaty.

Presumably the Allies then decided to 'go the

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whole hog' and take the German territory of Memel too, all that was said about it in the official summary of the Peace Treaty, being : 'The North-Eastern corner of East Prussia about Memel is to be ceded by Germany to the Associated Powers, the former agreeing to accept the settlement made, especially as regards the nationality of the inhabitants.

Other small Powers had still larger quantities of propagandist leaflets to distribute than had the Poles, but not generally with such successful results, and by the end of a day an energetic journalist could easily collect enough information about, say, Esthonia, Georgia, Jugoslavia, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, the Egyptians, the Dodecanese, the Greek demands in Asia Minor, and the Sinn Fein Republic, to enable him, if he had time to read through every page of every booklet, to make the *Encyclopædia Britannica* appear ill-informed. But then, of course, no one ever would have the time.

The Belgian demands, for example, did not meet at all with the welcome their proposers had hoped for. True, their claim to the cantons around

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Malmédy succeeded and they are now in possession of a certain amount of territory, formerly German, but *soi-disant* Walloon, and which a large percentage of the population of Belgium does not want. But their claims to Dutch Limburg and to the left bank of the Scheldt, which latter claim certainly does effect the people intimately, met with failure, and it is by no means certain that their extensive propaganda to assure the allegiance of Luxemburg will not be defeated by the still more extensive French propaganda to attach Luxemburg to France.

Belgium, in fact, is probably more angry with the Great Powers than any other country, not excluding China, who has seen the principle of 'no annexations' so successfully neglected in the case of Kiao Chow. The Chinese claim lost much of its force from the fact that China had not acted during the war in such a way as to merit the very deep-felt gratitude of the Allies, whereas Belgium certainly had. The refusal of the Belgian request that Brussels should be the capital of the League of Nations will be mentioned in another chapter devoted to that subject, but that refusal, painful

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though it was, had not nearly such an influence on the attitude of Belgium as had the treatment of her financial demands.

It was argued with justice that Belgium had not done so badly, seeing that she is to be released from the payment of money lent her by the Allies for war purposes, an amount of some £240,000,000, and that she has been promised priority in receiving £100,000,000 by way of reparations from Germany. But scarcely one firm in Belgium could undertake contracts until it had some idea as to when capital would be available, and for four months or more the Belgian delegation had been begging the Allies for a substantial credit so that they could put an end to the ever-increasing unemployment in Belgium. M. Vandervelde, who had to do his best to be in two places at once in order to solve labour problems in Brussels and to secure some compensation for Belgium in Paris, stated on more than one occasion, that, unless help in the form of credit was immediately forthcoming, Belgium would be the next country to 'go Bolshevik.' Even now the artificial state of affairs in the country—the

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extravagance and reckless waste on the one hand and the unemployment and terrible misery on the other—is considered as one fraught with extreme danger, and were there to be serious trouble there is no doubt that the Belgian Government would lay the blame on the Allies for their refusal to advance any money in time to set industry on its feet again.

Certainly the Belgian demands to the Council of Four were not lacking in quantity or in dramatic quality. On April 2nd there was something in the way of a sensation when the King of the Belgians arrived by aeroplane at Versailles and put the claims of his country before the Allies with the bluntness of a soldier. The Great Four were nearly, but not quite, frightened into taking a decision. At the end of the month, since they had managed to avoid definite promises to the King, M. Delacroix, Belgian Prime Minister, came to Paris to hurry them up. He hoped to persuade the Allies to credit Belgium at once with £200,000,000 but M. Hymans, who had already had plenty of opportunities of learning the dangers of losing all

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by asking too much, knew it was useless to ask for more than £100,000,000, and when M. Delacroix returned to Brussels the three Belgian Delegates went to see the Council of Three—for at that time Signor Orlando was listening to patriotic speeches in Rome—and held a revolver at their heads. The Belgian Three announced to the Big Three that they had no desire to indulge in histrionics, but that, unless they were at once assured immediate credit for £100,000,000, they would be unable to sign the Peace Treaty.

The Big Three wriggled, but they could not get away from the muzzle of the revolver. The Belgian Three wanted, among other things, at least 15 instead of 11 per cent. of the reparations paid to the Allies by Germany; a readjustment of the proposed new frontier in the Walloon cantons in the neighbourhood of Malmédy and Moresnet, as they maintained that the proposed frontier must have been suggested by a man who had never seen a railway map of the district in his life; and some grant of territory which would put them in a position to bring about a 'friendly exchange' with

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Holland. The revolver method worked very well as, although the Belgians did not get all they wanted, they were at once granted the £100,000,000 they had been demanding for four months.

M. Paul Hymans, besides being an extremely fascinating man, showed himself to be a very astute diplomatist, for he knew when to drop smooth-tongued diplomacy and to threaten force. Heaven knows the Italian departure created enough panic, but if 'martyred Belgium' had refused to sign the treaty drawn up by the nations that fought to save her, it is difficult to imagine who would have signed it.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

WHATEVER the failings and the shortcomings of the Peace Conference as a whole, whatever the things that it ought to have done or ought not to have done, it has taken a far greater step forward in the direction of the peaceful settlement of disputes than did the Athenians or Phœnicians or whoever the first partisans of a League of Nations were.

Every one was either anxious or more or less willing to set up a league of sorts, so that there was bound to be some tangible result of all the efforts of men like President Wilson, M. Léon Bourgeois, Lord Shaw, Lord Buckmaster, and the other men, great or small, who have worked in the interests of world peace. But the people who were more or less willing, were less willing than more when their own designs were in any way

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involved, so that the final result was bound to contain a number of surprises and inconsistencies.

And the greatest of these would appear to be the appointment of M. Pichon as first President of the League, for M. Pichon has always been perfectly frank in his scepticism of the powers of an international body, under the title of Société or League or anything else, whose object it was to maintain peace. Perhaps the idea of the American who proposed him was that the home of the League of Nations near Geneva would be so quiet and tranquil that even the French Foreign Minister would become an ardent believer in universal peace and the possibilities of securing it. On one occasion, it is true, I heard him speak in favour of the League, but never have I heard any project so damned with faint praise, and his League evidently was not the League of the President of the United States.

The League was born in the most unfavourable circumstances, and it was hardly to be hoped then that it would flourish as well as it has done. Before

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the first plenary session to discuss it there had been sundry bickerings as to its future name, as the French held that League was a term denoting compulsion, whereas Society stood for co-operation and friendship. And on that afternoon in January, when the membership of the commissions, including that of the League of Nations was proclaimed by M. Clemenceau in the Salle de l'Horloge, one caught a glimpse of the difficulties that would have to be overcome before the League had any chance of achieving its great object.

Every one but the delegates of the Great Powers themselves must have been astounded on that afternoon. You must picture a large, over-decorated room in red and gold, with, on one side, the great windows looking out on the yellow flooded Seine, and on the other side, a mass of journalists and pseudo-journalists—one lady, I remember, managed to gain admission on the ground that she represented the *Philippine Islands Gazette*; others had no excuse at all, but were allowed in by a much-decorated gentleman who was very willing to accept twenty-franc notes. Probably he would

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have been pleased with less, but, one had not the pluck to offer less than five francs per decoration, so that twenty francs was the minimum. On the one side there was the river, on the other side the onlookers, and in the arena the Tiger ate up the Christians. He stood at the head of the horse-shoe table along which sat the delegates in varying degrees of importance, and he told them that they were extremely lucky to be consulted at all. I remember Mr Lloyd George, at the Savoy Hotel at a luncheon given to Dr Pachitch, saying, 'I am a believer in small nations'—and here he sat unblushingly while his colleague stated that, whereas the five Great Powers would have a delegate member on every commission, the other nations, lumped together, would be allowed to choose four members between them.

It was on this afternoon, when M. Clemenceau bobbed up and down, and thumped his gray-gloved fists on the table in his efforts to silence the protests of M. Paul Hymans and M. Roman Dmowski, that the greatest battle to make the League a real League was fought, for all the

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protests were caused more by the manifest lack of representation on the League of Nations Commission than by the compositions of the other commissions. The small nations realised that a league based upon an autocracy of the mighty was only half a league, and they were upset even more by the dictatorial attitude of M. Clemenceau, than by the rules and regulations he laid down. The only people, too, who had a word to say in favour of the immediate inclusion of neutrals in the League were one or two delegates of the smaller nations.

On the other hand, it was argued that these limitations were absolutely necessary to ensure a speedy peace. Too many cooks would spoil the broth. Certainly, whenever they had a chance, the smaller powers simply overflowed with frothy eloquence, but that may have been because they had so few chances.

The first draft of the League of Nations Covenant met with a certain amount of hostility, the second draft with a great deal of hostility. But, at any rate, those who were responsible can look back

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and sigh to themselves, like our school-days friend, the Village Blacksmith, that there is 'something accomplished, something done, to earn a night's repose,' whereas the cynics who did their best to prevent the formation of any league because they refused to believe in it, certainly earned no repose at all, although they are probably enjoying it even more than the idealists. But then that is the way of the world.

The first draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations was violently attacked on both sides. While Senator Borah was stating that nothing on earth would induce him to support the League, and was busy organising a counter-league, and a large number of Americans were becoming panic-stricken lest they should be dragged by it into European politics, Mr Ramsey Macdonald summed it up to a friend as 'the most lamentable document he had ever set eyes on,' and the British Labour Party, at a Special National Conference held in London on April 3rd, while welcoming the creation of any sort of League, drew up a series of amendments which a high-placed American delegate

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informed me tallied very closely with the ideas that President Wilson had hoped would be embodied in his League.

This being so, it is interesting to notice one or two of the more important amendments suggested. Firstly, in the Covenant of the League, no especial provision is made for the immediate admission of the enemy powers, and the amendment drawn up by the Labour Party runs: 'That, as this Article (Article VII.) contemplates the starting of the League without invitations being sent to Russia or any of the late enemy countries, the Article be redrafted so as to provide that these countries may take part in the inauguration of the League.'

That Germany should at once be made a member of the League was certainly the original desire of Mr Wilson, and one of the first duties of the Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond, despite the refusal to admit the Germans immediately, will probably be to invite the Germans and Austrians to join the League. At any rate, it was considered advisable by the authorities to start a certain

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amount of propaganda so as to prepare the public for the admission of Germany.

Article VIII. caused more controversy than any other. In the preliminary draft the High Contracting Parties agreed 'that the maintenance of peace will require the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war lends itself to grave objections.' The British Labour Party (and, presumably, Mr Wilson) suggested that no armies should be raised by conscription, and that 'the manufacture of armaments should be under the direct control of the League, as well as whatever forces are necessary for police purposes.'

Lastly, President Wilson may be assumed to have been in favour, as was also the Labour Party, of giving more power to the Body of Delegates, or the Assembly, on which each of the High Contracting Parties is represented, and less to the Executive Council, which consists of representatives of the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan, 'together with repre-

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representatives of four other States members of the League.'

The original Convention, then, did not meet with full approval, but President Wilson certainly looked cheerful about it, when he read it out to the Conference the afternoon of the day on which he returned to the United States to meet the opposition there. It was only after his departure that the trouble really began, and this trouble was greatly aggravated by the strong protests he had made against the attitude which the French Press had taken up against him. Led by the irrepressible 'Pertinax'—a rather unpleasant Japanese-looking gentleman with glasses and an unwashed appearance—in the *Echo de Paris*, the French papers attacked the President day after day, and the expressive gaps made in the papers by a very busy censor did more harm than good, for the missing adjective always appeared more insulting than it could have possibly been.

The climax came when, on February 8th, a few days before the President's departure, M. Clemenceau gave an interview to a representative of the

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Associated Press of America, in which he appeared to cast doubts on the efficacy of the League of Nations. That, at any rate, must have been the way in which Mr Wilson took it, for he burst out into a furious tirade against the French criticisms, and threatened to leave Paris and to call the Conference elsewhere. Happily, the time came for him to return to the United States, and a rupture was avoided, but while M. Clemenceau said all sorts of pleasant things to him on the station platform, the majority of the French nation was probably wishing he would go to Jericho or Timbuctoo, or wherever the French consign persons they do not want. It was certainly a quaint piece of irony that the man who had advocated open diplomacy and the avoidance of all secrecy, should have been the first man to object to open criticism, and the French were not slow to take advantage of this inconsistency. From the moment of Mr Wilson's protest his opponents gained the allegiance of the mass of people who had previously been swaying uncertainly from side to side.

The final Convention of the League of Nations,

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as adopted by the Peace Conference on April 28th, contained certain amendments that took away most of its power.

As early as the end of January, there was a strong feeling in America against the League, as it was only logical that it would necessitate some modification of the Monroe doctrine, and the Republicans, chiefly on political grounds, would have none of this. On March 4th, Senator Lodge introduced a resolution to the Senate to the effect that, while the Senate desired 'the union of the nations of the world to promote peace, 'the constitution of the League of Nations in the form now proposed to the Peace Conference, should not be accepted by the United States.'

More than one-third of the members of the Senate supported this resolution—so strong a body that there had to be a compromise. Before the middle of March a 'reservation' clause for the Monroe doctrine had been drafted to silence Senator Lodge, and this was later included in the Convention. In the opinion of many, this step did much to ruin the prestige of the League.

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The 'reservation' clause was Article XXI., which stated :—'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe doctrine for securing the maintenance of peace.'

The 'reservation' clause was passed on the ground that the Monroe doctrine had already shown itself to be a powerful instrument for the maintenance of peace, and had in no way served to benefit national greed or ambitions. Article X. of the Covenant was in itself a distinct commendation of the Monroe doctrine. Nevertheless great comment was caused by the fact that this 'reservation' clause was left to the Drafting Sub-Committee of the League of Nations Commission—thus creeping in, as it were, by the back door, while the French and the Japanese amendments had to march up the front steps in full publicity, and were then turned back by the guardians of the main entrance.

The Japanese amendment was one that might, it appears, have been accepted by the other Allies

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with very little sacrifice to themselves. The original amendment ran as follows :—

‘The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality.’

This amendment was omitted in the first draft Convention which was discussed at the plenary session of February 14th, and Baron Makino stated he would bring the amendment up again, in a modified form. For the next two months the Japanese drafted amendment after amendment, in the hope of finding one that would satisfy the other Allies. The Dominions, who were very difficult to please, pointed out that a Japanese or a Chinaman, being accustomed to a lower standard of life, could, if the conditions for nationals of all countries and foreigners were the same, set up a shop in, say,

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some small town in South Africa, and undersell all the other storekeepers in the place. The Japanese replied that this could be regulated by emigration laws, and that the recognition of equality of races would not bind any country to a policy that would cut its own throat. All the Japanese demanded—after their amendment had been modified—was that a clause in the Covenant should enunciate the principle of the equality of all nations. Unless this was done, not only would the Japanese delegates be ashamed to return home, but the whole Japanese nation would feel it had been slighted.

In the words of Baron Makino, at the Plenary Session which adopted the League of Nations Covenant on April 28th :—

‘If just and equal treatment is denied to certain nationals it would have the significance of a certain reflection on their quality and status. Their faith in the justice and righteousness which are to be the guiding spirit of the future international intercourse between the members of the League may be shaken, and such a frame of mind, I am afraid, would be

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most detrimental to that harmony and co-operation upon which foundation alone can the League now contemplated be securely built. It was solely and purely from our desire to see the League established on a sound and firm basis of good will, justice, and reason, that we have been compelled to make our proposal. We will not, however, press for the adoption of our proposal at this moment.

‘In closing, I feel it my duty to declare clearly on this occasion that the Japanese Government and people feel poignant regret at the failure of the commission to approve of their just demand for laying down a principle aiming at the adjustment of this long-standing grievance, a demand that is based upon a deep-rooted national conviction. They will continue in their insistence for the adoption of this principle by the League in future.’

Certainly it is not surprising that the Japanese were hurt, for the Peace Conference cannot have done much to impress them with the superiority of the Western Civilisations. It was very difficult to sit between a Japanese and a Chinaman at lunch,

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in the middle of this exhibition of insensate greed and bickering, while your lords and masters told their lords and masters that they were not yet civilised enough to have equality of treatment with us, that they were only coloured men. The Japanese, especially, made so many valuable suggestions to the Peace Conference, that their treatment as inferior beings caused much comment.

But the strangest thing of all about the rejection of the Japanese amendment was the voting.

The clause admitting the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine was passed by the League of Nations Commission by a majority, but it was by no means passed unanimously. I believe both the Japanese and Mr Lloyd George opposed it. It was immediately sent to the drafting sub-committee for inclusion in the Convention.

The Japanese amendment was passed by the League of Nations Committee by a large majority (eleven votes out of seventeen), but it was rejected on the ground that it would have to be passed with unanimity. It will be remembered that President Wilson was President of this League of Nations

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Commission, and it would be interesting to hear what explanation can be given for the different treatment accorded to his and to the Japanese amendments.

The French amendments were based upon distrust of the strength of the League in its present form, and their rejection necessitated the creation of the defensive alliance of Great Britain, France, and the United States against Germany. M. Léon Bourgeois and his colleagues decided to out-Wilson Wilson, and they proposed two amendments which, they insisted, would have ensured the effectiveness of the League. Their motives may not have been so disinterested as those of President Wilson, but their instinct for self-preservation made them a lot more practical. Twice within the last fifty years the Prussians had laid waste their territories and had brought mourning and suffering into thousands of homes. Now they had gained a complete victory, and they wanted to use it in such a way as to prevent any possibility of a repetition of the German invasion, but they were told they could not make the sort of peace they would like to make. They

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must conform to a set of principles that were supposed to be a panacea for all wars and thoughts of wars. The annexation of the left bank of the Rhine or economic conditions that would crush Germany would leave in the spirit of the Germans a desire for revenge, which would lead to other wars. They were asked to give up these very material guarantees of peace for a score of years or more for the vague and intangible guarantees of the League of Nations which was to secure peace everlasting. In that case, they argued, there must be more materialism in the Covenant of the League; they were tired of scraps of paper.

So they determined that their two amendments must be adopted.

The first of these amendments was worded as follows :—

‘A permanent organisation shall be constituted for the purpose of considering and providing for naval and military measures to enforce the obligations arising from the agreements entered into by the High Contracting Parties under this

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Covenant and making it operative in all cases of emergency.'

It would not do to start collecting an international army when the territories of one of the members of the League were already being invaded. The kernel of an army must always be ready, preferably in France, to put down any possible rising and to show that the League had material force behind it. As one French statesman put it to me, it would be just as useless to read out articles of the League of Nations to the generals of a people bent on war as it would be to read the Bible to an infuriated bull. This amendment, which was rejected by the League of Nations Commission, was brought up again at the plenary session on April 28th, by M. Léon Bourgeois, but was withdrawn, as was also the second amendment, as there is more hope that they will be adopted when the League is actually working. This amendment was all that remained of the famous scheme to maintain an international army which had been put forward by the French, and had been rejected chiefly by the Americans, who quoted

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long paragraphs from their Constitution to prove American Armies could not be maintained outside the United States except in time of war. In every case where the American Constitution came into conflict with the clauses of the Peace Conference—on an average of once a fortnight—the Peace Conference had to suffer. But the difficulties of deciding where and how the international army should be maintained would have condemned the scheme even without the rigidity of the American Constitution, besides which no nation was anxious to maintain an army in some foreign country even under the ægis of the League of Nations, so that the international army would have dwindled down to a French army maintained in France under the benevolent eye of the League.

Even in its modified form of 'a permanent organisation for the purpose of considering and providing for naval and military measures to enforce the obligations arising from the agreements entered into by the High Contractory Parties' the plan received very little support from the other Powers, as it was argued that any permanent body of the

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sort would tend to preserve just what the League most wished to destroy—militarism. M. Léon Bourgeois will have to modify his amendment still further if he hopes to get it adopted by the League of Nations at a later date.

The second amendment, which had adherents in every country, was to the effect that :—

‘The High Contracting Parties being determined to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of armaments their military and naval programmes, and the conditions of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes, have appointed a committee for the purpose of ascertaining as far as possible the above information.’

The Convention contained no reference to a committee to obtain this information and, without somebody that had the right to visit any factory in any country, there would appear to be no way of making certain that the ‘full and frank information’ was accurate. Germany might arm secretly for years, and no one would be any the wiser. So the

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French amendment, one thought, would receive a great welcome.

And yet it was violently opposed, chiefly by the delegates from the United States, who refused to make their own League the powerful instrument for the maintenance of peace that it was intended to be. Lord Robert Cecil also opposed the amendment for reasons that will be given later, but the American delegates were opposed to it because they felt that the United States Senate would never ratify a measure of the kind, and that 'it would be an offence to our dignity to have people verifying our statements.'

The arguments of Lord Robert Cecil against the amendment were also not without interest. I had the opportunity of a talk with him in April on the subject, and he stated that in his views nothing should be done to make the League a super-national body. I suggested that, unless it were super-national it could never be really effective, but Lord Robert did not agree with this. As for an international inspectorate, he considered this unnecessary, as neighbouring nations would be certain to keep a

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thorough watch on each other to see that there was no secret arming. To my remark that the League would thus promote international distrust and espionage, Lord Robert replied that, as far as he could see, espionage was quite a flourishing profession even without encouragement.

In view of the rejection of these two amendments, the French delegates renewed their demand for the permanent occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, which was afterwards whittled down to fifteen years, and for the creation of a defensive league. The latter proposal was welcomed coldly by both British and Americans, but the French were naturally very insistent, and were able to reply very effectively to the argument that such an alliance would be a direct confession that even the three greatest Powers had not confidence in the League. The British, in their refusal to hear of the freedom of the seas, and the Americans in their refusal to give up the Monroe doctrine had, the French maintained, already confessed their lack of confidence in the League. So toward the end of April, the French had their way—the British promised that their

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army should at once come to the help of the French if ever the Germans crossed the Rhine, and President Wilson, who was unable to do anything without the consent of his people, promised to ask the Senate to sanction similar action.

Lord Robert Cecil was also able to point out that it was as difficult for an 'unredeemed' nation to enter the League of Nations as it was, and is, for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Suppose Ireland or Egypt demanded entry to the League,' he was asked, 'what action would be taken?'

The British League of Nations delegate shied at such definite questions, but he was unable to bolt—he was at bay in a room in the Hotel Astoria. 'The League would take no steps at all,' he stated at last, 'as both Egypt and Ireland are parts of the British Empire, and it is expressly stated that the League shall not mix itself up in the domestic affairs of a nation.'

'But if Ireland maintains she is an independent republic, and requests the League to assist her as such?'

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'The League could not help her as she is not a member of the League except as part of the British Empire.'

'But if she wanted to become a member of the League?'

'She could always apply, and her case might be considered, but she would, according to Article 1 of the Covenant, have to be elected by the States members of the League by a two-thirds majority.'

And as few States, if any, would vote against so powerful a member of the Council as Great Britain, even should the question of Ireland ever come up for discussion, it is scarcely surprising that Mr O'Kelly, the Sinn Fein delegate, had not very much hope of help from the League of Nations.

Nothing tended to make the League more unpopular than the very natural efforts of President Wilson to rush it through with the Peace Treaty. Good intentions are apt to be forgotten, and others of the Fourteen Points had been neglected, so that Mr Wilson felt he must work to found the League

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at once or not at all. The French propagandists insisted with unfailing regularity that the discussions as to the League were delaying the Peace Treaty. The President insisted, on the other hand, that this was not the case. The preliminary draft which was completed before his return to America, was discussed and drawn up by the League of Nations Commission working almost entirely at night, and even after his return, when the French and some sections of the British press had become openly hostile, the peace delegates were certainly better occupied in discussing the League of Nations than they would have been in fiddling about with side issues such as the fate of Montenegro (who, by the way, was promised a delegate as soon as the Peace Conference could decide whether that delegate should represent the ex-King of Montenegro or the party which desired to place itself under the rulership of the Karageorgevitches, and who has never yet had her delegate appointed, in spite of repeated appeals from both parties).

How necessary it was, too, that the League should be part and parcel of the Peace Treaty is made

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apparent in the settlement of the German Colonies. It will be remembered that the League decided that :—

‘To those colonies and territories which, as a consequence of the late war, have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples for a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Government.

‘The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.’

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And yet on May 7th, the following official announcement was made :—

‘The Council of Three—M. Clemenceau, President Wilson, and Mr Lloyd George—yesterday decided as to the disposition of the former German colonies as follows :—

‘Togoland and Cameroon.—France and Great Britain shall make a joint recommendation to the League of Nations as to their future.

German East Africa.—The mandate shall be held by Great Britain.

‘German South-West Africa.—The mandate shall be held by the Union of South Africa.

‘The German Samoan Islands.—The mandate shall be held by New Zealand.

‘Other Pacific Possessions.—Those south of the Equator (excluding the German Samoan Islands and Nauru).—The mandate shall be held by Australia.

‘Nauru.—The mandate shall be given to the British Empire.

‘Islands North of the Equator.—The mandate shall be held by Japan.’

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It would seem a little difficult to know where the League of Nations comes in, and how, if on one day the other Great Powers refuse to recognise that all peoples are equal, as claimed in the Japanese amendment, they can on the following day hand over to Japan, as an 'advanced nation,' a share in this 'sacred trust of civilisation.'

The Belgians grew to dislike President Wilson on account of his action when the Capital of the League had to be chosen. It appeared to them that Brussels was the obvious city to be selected, since the invasion of Belgium was the crowning example of disregard of international agreements, and the first factor that made people realise the necessity for a League of Nations. President Wilson was very downright in his desire to found the Capital near Geneva, as he feared that the League would not flourish in any of the countries that had been belligerent, and where hate might still be expected to be rampant. It was argued that nothing would so soon kill hate as the choice of a city such as Brussels as the Capital of a great organisation to maintain peace, but Mr Wilson was

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adamant. France supported the Belgian claim, which obtained seven votes as against twelve given for Geneva. Judging from the descriptions of the site, on the edge of the lake, it is not surprising that nearly every government official you meet is anxious to find a post on the staff of the League, and that they all carry about with them guide-books to Switzerland.

In fact, there is some danger lest the League should degenerate into a bureaucratic institution. And herein lies the explanation of an action by President Wilson which would have startled his labour supporters mightily had they come to hear of it at the time. The Assembly, or Body of Delegates, is to consist of not more than three members representing each nation which belonged to the League. The Labour Parties of the world were particularly pleased with this, since they imagined that wherever Labour was politically strong, the three delegates would be the leaders of the three principal parties—the leader, or a deputy of the leader, of the Government, of the Opposition, and of the Labour or Socialist party. In many

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cases they imagined President Wilson had been the instigator of this proposal, whereas, in fact, he opposed it. He did not want each nation to be able to appoint three delegates. The few Labour leaders who knew of this were very astonished and upset, but the President's reasons were sound. It would not do, he said, for there to be more people than necessary attached to the League, as they would only make mischief. If there were no international disputes they would cause them themselves. The simpler the organisation the better.

As a matter of fact, the staff promises to be enormous as it is, as the maintenance of peace in, for example, Dantzig will keep a multitude employed, and the States members of the League have, it will be remembered, agreed 'to place under the control of the League all international bureaux already established by general treaties, if the parties to such treaties consent. Furthermore, they agree that all such international bureaux to be constituted in future shall be placed under the control of the League.'

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The Council of Four, and before it, the Council of Ten, were requested to include in the Peace Treaty, generally under the League of Nations Section, one or two very strange proposals. A gentleman arrived from the United States in order to secure inclusion in the Treaty a clause advocating, if not actually ordering, Prohibition in all countries whose delegates signed the Treaty, and another American, who has started an anti-tobacco league, is said to have entertained great hopes for his foible although he never actually came to Paris.

Another proposal was made at the time when the Allies were seeking a solution of the problem of the future of Heligoland. Through the British Foreign Office, the attention of the Great Four was drawn to the fact that Heligoland was a great nesting-place of seabirds. Why not reserve it for them in perpetuity? A few keepers—probably Germans supervised by the League of Nations—would look after the place after the fortress had been dismantled. This suggestion was seriously considered, but apparently was not adopted, as the official summary of the Treaty only lays down that 'the

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fortifications, military establishments, and harbours in the islands of Heligoland and Dune are to be destroyed, under the supervision of the Allies, by German labour and at Germany's expense. They are not to be reconstructed, nor are any similar works to be constructed in the future.' And the unfortunate birds have not the honour of being mentioned in the Peace Treaty.

Yet another proposal of the same kind dealt with the African continent. It was asked that the Treaty should include a clause for the preservation of big game, as, especially with the progress of flying, there was danger of the complete extinction of many species of animals. Here again the Peace Conference lost a priceless opportunity of winning the lasting gratitude and respect of naturalists all the world over, even if Colonel Walter Guinness, who estimated in the House of Commons that the Peace Conference was costing £270,000 a day, would not have been entirely pleased to think time was being taken up with such propositions.

No peace project earned so much ridicule as the British proposal to sink the German fleet. The

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proposal was brought forward in the middle of February, when the naval terms of the renewed armistice were being discussed, and it immediately met with great hostility on the part of the French. The British insisted that the navies of the Allies should not be increased, and some bright gentleman suggested that the German ships should be taken out into the Atlantic and sent to the bottom with much pomp and circumstance. People who knew nothing at all about the whole thing grew heated in their arguments as to whether it was worth while to break war vessels up, whether they were of any use at all for mercantile purposes, whether the German fleet should be given to England, since the British fleet had kept it quiet during the war, whether it should be divided up, and in what proportions, whether it should be sold as 'scrap,' etc. But the French were united in their determination that it should not be sunk, and on the very day that Lord Lytton, in the House of Lords, said :—

'It is for the Paris Conference to decide what is to be done with the German fleet. A point to which

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the British Government attach the greatest importance is that these ships should not continue to form part of any of the naval armaments of the world.

‘Only three courses are open—to sink the ships, to have them broken up, or to put them up for auction. I do not know whether it is an economic proposition to break them up. That is a question for experts. If it will pay to use the material composing the ships for any other purpose, no doubt the Conference will decide in favour of that course. Personally, I favour the sale of the ships by auction to be used as scrap.’

M. Georges Leygues, French Minister of Marine—who looks, by the way, as though he had never been on the sea in his life except perhaps on a crowded pleasure steamer—stated that the French navy could only reconstruct its forces by imposing fresh sacrifices on the country or by recovering from the enemy part of the tonnage that it had lost. The latter solution, without prejudicing the decisions the Conference might take to reduce armaments,

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seemed to him the only just one, and he could not for a moment believe that any one had really the desire to sink the German fleet.

If I remember rightly, on another occasion he stated that if the British proposal were carried out he would resign. However, he was saved from carrying out his threat, for the German fleet was not sunk with great spectacular effect in the middle of the Atlantic.¹ And I, for one, being completely ignorant of the practicability of breaking up a vessel of war, am glad that the proposition, *beau geste* though it would have been, was never adopted, although it might make people object to heavy navy estimates in the future.

The British took a very prominent part in another question of the armistice terms, for it will be remembered that it was Mr Lloyd George who managed to abolish conscription in the German Army. And a difficult task he had, too. He promised at the time of the election that he would do his utmost to abolish conscription all the world

¹ This was, of course, written before the Germans had settled the problem themselves by sinking their own fleet at Scapa Flow.—Author's Note.

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over; he succeeded in abolishing it in the country where it had had the firmest hold, and that in spite of the stubborn opposition of Marshal Foch. But the conference does not appear to have succeeded in abolishing the spirit of militarism, for already the smaller powers have objected to any limitation of their armaments and have even threatened to resign from the League unless the idea was abolished. At the moment of writing the Great Powers have taken no definite action, but it may be anticipated that they will give way, as they always do when threatened, and that the 'plans for such reduction (of armaments) for the consideration and action of the several Governments' will be ineffective for several years at least.

The arguments in favour of conscription, and the arguments in favour of voluntary recruiting, are too well known to bear repetition. To the majority of Englishmen, it would undoubtedly appear far less dangerous to let Germany have an army of one hundred thousand men recruited for twelve years, than a million or more men trained by conscription. But Marshal Foch did not like the

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idea of one hundred thousand well-trained men as the skeleton of an army, and his compatriots backed him up with unanimity. After all, the French were the people most intimately concerned in the possible revival of militarism in Germany.

It was a little difficult to see why, if Marshal Foch was so alarmed by the power of a voluntary system in Germany as against a system of conscription, he does not oppose conscription in France and advocate the voluntary system, which he would appear to think the more formidable. However, every one in France opposed Mr Lloyd George, the Socialists being the most outspoken of all, and the abolition of conscription in Germany, despite even the opinion of the Generalissimo, was the greatest of the many victories which Mr Lloyd George won at the Peace Conference.

Before leaving altogether the League of Nations, it might be as well to say a word about the neutrals. Even before the first League of Nations plenary session they were asking for admission, and a well-known member of the British diplomatic service informed me that nowhere had he met with such

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enthusiasm for the League as in Norway and Sweden. The neutrals, of course, while they had suffered considerably during the war, had not the same hatred that had so impeded the growth of opinion in favour of the League in belligerent countries, and that had made it appear unpatriotic to think of universal peace. Colonel House, who took nearly as keen an interest in the League as his close friend, the President, informed me that when the neutrals were invited to Paris to give their views, he was much impressed by the thoroughness with which they had studied the subject, and every one was glad when thirteen neutral states were invited to become members. When Spain was invited to send a member to the Council there was, it is true, a certain amount of opposition, partly because it still further reduced the influence of the lesser Allies as one of their four seats was given to a neutral, and partly because of a strong feeling that Norway or Sweden should have been chosen rather than Spain. The election of a neutral to the Council meant that, while the five Great Powers each had its member, all the other Allies

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were to be represented by a delegate from Belgium, one from Brazil, and one from Greece.

It was, perhaps, strange that the chief protest against the admission of a neutral to the Council should have come from the Portuguese delegate, Dr Affonso Costa, as the Portuguese member of the League of Nations Commission, Senor Batalha Reis, told me one day, as he pulled at his little white beard, that he was 'far too old to be taken in by such whims and fancies as Leagues of Nations.'

As a matter of fact, the invitation to neutral countries to become members of the League was occasioned partly by the fear that Germany or Russia might set up a rival league, and it was thought wise to make the Paris League as strong as possible without delay. But, whatever the motive, the invitation to the neutrals did much to dissipate the suspicion that the League of Nations was merely another Holy Alliance. The League has been born after the War to end War, and what many people call the Peace to end Peace, but even in its present form it may succeed in changing the Peace into a Peace to end War.

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As the League Convention stands at present, it certainly discourages the war parties in any country where they are to be found, for the provisions to prevent war are many. In some way armaments are to be limited; the territory and independence of any member of the League will be protected by all the other members *en masse*; any threat of war, or state of affairs that might produce war, is immediately to be considered by the Council, as it is recognised that it is a matter of international importance; no member will go to war until arbitration has been tried and has failed; disputes will be made public so that the arguments will be known to the whole world; financial, economic, and, if necessary, military measures are to be taken against any State, member or non-member of the League, that is bent on war.

Altogether a cheerless outlook for generals and war profiteers !

After all, in the words of the official commentary, 'if the nations of the future are in the main selfish, grasping, and bellicose, no instrument or machinery will restrain them. It is only possible to establish

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an organisation which may make peaceful co-operation easy, and hence customary, and to trust in the influence of custom to mould opinion.'

And the League of Nations may do all that. Who knows?

CHAPTER VII

ITALY

IN the years to come when President Wilson, strolling through the beautiful grounds of the Capital of the League of Nations, happens to meet Baron Sonnino seated on a bench talking to himself in Italian—or should it be Yiddish?—I believe the great American, who has been likened by a French newspaper to a marble statue that speaks, will grind his big teeth with rage and wave his clenched fists in the air. I can see him trying to control himself at the thought that he treads on sacred ground, and clinging desperately to the back of the bench. As for the Baron, he will probably jump up into the branches of one of the fir-trees and squat there chattering all sorts of high phrases about Italy and what she did in the Great War, and high insults about President Wilson and his efforts to avoid going to war altogether.

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It needed no soothsayer to prophesy trouble between the Italians and the Jugoslavs, for there had been fighting between the two peoples in Dalmatia even before the Conference began, and Signor Orlando was talking of Italy's 'just claims' to Fiume, and President Wilson's favouritism for the Jugoslavs even before the first plenary session. But the censor, as usual, had been very busy, and Gabriele d'Annunzio's 'Letter to the Dalmatians,' at the beginning of February, came as a bombshell to the majority of people in Paris.

Frenchmen who had known the fiery poet in the days before the war, when he used to haunt the *cabarets* of Montmartre, had realised that his friendship was of doubtful durability, but it must have surprised even them to find themselves described in d'Annunzio's letter as 'the people who hungered for revenge'—and where is the Italian who did not hunger for revenge against Austria, in spite of the Triple Alliance?

'The people who hungered for revenge,' he wrote of the French, 'drunk with victory, now bedeck themselves once more with plumes, tune up their

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war trumpets, and quicken their pace to out-distance the more resolute and more alert.' Somehow, one prefers him in his novels; he is less obscure.

Of the people of the United States he merely said :—' They do not dissimulate the fact that under the mask of an eternal ideal they have brought off the best and largest stroke of business they ever attempted.'

And while Italy was described as the 'most victorious of all nations,' who had 'fought unaided' and yet had gained the 'victory of victories,' the British were dismissed with a :—'The five-meals-a-day people' who 'having only just finished their bloody work, open their jaws again to swallow down everything they can.' We who only eat four, or even three, meals a day have felt ever since that we could not be true Britons.

I happened to be lunching with several members of the Italian Delegation on February 2nd, the day on which the famous letter was published in Paris. And there was not one who did not agree with it entirely although they thought its phrasing might

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have been slightly less anti-Ally. They all declared that they must have Fiume, 'that most Italian of cities,' as Signor Orlando once described it, although he must have known, as did every one else, that the Italians are in the minority there, and that a hundred years ago there was scarcely an Italian in the place.

The official figures for the last census, taken by the Magyars in 1910, show that there were less than 25,000 Italians in Fiume and Susak, its suburb, which is only separated by a very narrow stream, and there were more than 27,000 Slavs. Furthermore, it was in the interest of the Magyars to minimise the Slav influence as much as possible, and these figures would err, if at all, in favour of Italy.

The difficulty was that the Italians wanted to eat their cake and have it. By the Pact of London in 1915, they were promised Trieste, Sebenico, Spalato, Zara, and several of the islands as well as part of the hinterland—but not Fiume. By the principle of 'self determination of peoples' they insisted that Fiume should come to them. The two demands

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were based on completely contradictory principles, so the Italians maintained them both, and thereby gently dropped the Allies on the horns of a dilemma.

Either they had to say that President Wilson's Fourteen Points meant nothing to them, that they did believe in Secret Treaties, and did not believe in the self-determination of peoples; or they had to stick to the terms on which they had agreed to make peace, and to tell the Italians that the Pact of London was no longer valid. They chose the third, and most obvious, course—they decided to lie low and say nothing, like Brer Rabbit.

Had one not realised a little what might be the disastrous consequences of such a policy, it would have been really funny. Each Thursday evening, for example, it was the custom for M. Tardieu, one of the French plenipotentiaries, to receive journalists of all nationalities in the Foreign Office and to give an exhibition of diplomatic skill in warding off the fierce questions of the American journalists and the more polite inquiries of correspondents from other parts of the world. When an Italian entered the

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room, he would glance round anxiously and would place himself as far away as possible from any Yugoslav who was there, and *vice versa*. For a time all would go well, and then, as though they were the closest of friends, Italians and Jugoslavs would ask simultaneously when their question was to be settled by the Peace Conference. M. Tardieu would do his best to quieten them, but after the one common inquiry the Italians and the Jugoslavs would carry on a kind of duel of semi-insulting questions. 'When would the Council of Ten exchange the Italian garrisons in Dalmatia for French or British or American ones?' the Jugoslavs would ask. 'When would repressive measures be taken against those authorities who had driven the Italian Military Mission out of Laibach?' the Italians would at once demand. And so on, and so on, while the unfortunate M. Tardieu, with his fixed smile, would try to put an end to the floods of angry eloquence.

And while the officials of every delegation were doing all they could to make out that the Italians and Jugoslavs were on the best of terms, I witnessed

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a little incident that was significant of the real feeling between the peoples

One day a famous Italian journalist had invited one of the Italian plenipotentiaries to lunch at the Maison Dufayel, the huge and oppressively decorative palace on the Champs Elysées which the French Government had generously placed at the disposal of the Allied journalists. The two Italians unwittingly sat down at the next table to a party of Serbians. There was a moment's whispering, and then, with a great scraping of chairs, the Serbians got up and moved to another table at the other side of the room.

So, although the Great Powers lay low and said nothing, the Italians and the Jugoslavs had plenty to say. They produced delegations from various towns in Dalmatia. The Italians brought to Paris the Mayor of Fiume, and the Jugoslavs countered with a number of individuals who brought with them the results of a plebiscite held in the occupied communes of Dalmatia, showing an enormous vote in their favour. The Jugoslavs issued a daily news bulletin recounting the outrages committed by the

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Italians in Dalmatia, and the Italians invited any journalist who could spare a fortnight to go for a trip on an Italian destroyer all the way down the Dalmatian coast (and that at a time when Paris was particularly damp and dismal). Not one British journalist, however, availed himself of an invitation which would have forced him to take sides.

The Serbian tales of Italian atrocities lost a certain amount of their effect on account of a tale that was circulated in Paris, and which originated no one knew where. For the first few months of the war, it was said, Bulgars and Serbs were making great display of the most appalling photographs of atrocities said to have been committed by Serbs and Bulgars respectively. The peoples of the Allied Powers and of the Central Empires were horrified and enraged by these photographs, and it was only after many weeks that it was discovered that each country had been making propaganda with the same photographs, only labelled Bulgar atrocities or Serbian atrocities as the case required.

The Italians and the Jugoslavs waited with

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anxiety to see how the Supreme Council would deal with the dispute between Serbia and Rumania for the Banat of Temesvar, which came up for discussion before the Italian problem. The Rumanians had been promised the Banat by the Secret Treaty of 1916 as part of their reward for coming into the war, and the Serbs claimed part of it on the principle of self determination. It was imagined that if the Rumanian Secret Treaty was 'scrapped,' the Italian Secret Treaty would suffer the same fate as the two cases appeared to be analogous. When it was reported that the settlement of the Banat question was not to be based on the Secret Treaty, the joy of the Jugoslavs knew no bounds, for Italy, too, would be treated in the same way as Rumania.

Two days later the Jugoslavs were in the depths of depression. The cases of Italy and Rumania were not similar, it appeared, for the Rumanians had signed a separate peace, and the Italians had not. And the Italians had won the first round.

- ✓ Had the other Allies only possessed the courage to deal with the question at the beginning of the Conference, it is the opinion of most of the experts

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that a really friendly settlement might have been reached even as late as the end of February, when the unfortunate incident at Laibach, where the Jugoslavs turned out the Italian Military Mission, occurred, and put an end to any hopes of friendly relations. In excuse for what appeared to have been very dictatorial methods, the Italians pointed out that the Slovenes and Croats had fought against them during the war, and could not therefore be treated entirely as Allies.

✓ By the middle of March things had come to such a pass that on March 21st, the members of the Italian delegation, meeting in the Hotel Edouard VII., decided unanimously that they would leave the Peace Conference unless Fiume were given to them when peace was signed. The reasons they gave for demanding not only the cities promised in the Secret Treaty, but also Fiume, were innumerable, but an American delegate told me that none of them influenced him so much as the fact that Spalato sounded so much more euphonious than Split, the Slav name for the same town.

The Italians were given some sort of promise

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that their demands should be considered before the enemy delegates were called to sign the peace Treaty, and things quieted down for a while, thanks chiefly to the moderating influence of Signor Orlando.

But the months of careful propaganda organised by Baron Sonnino had been only too successful, for the people of Italy had by now got it into their heads that Fiume was entirely Italian, and when Signor Orlando returned to Italy in March, he found such a wave of public feeling as swept him off his political feet altogether. He had either to go with the tide, or to go under altogether, and, like many a man before him, he chose the former course. When he returned to Paris he showed himself as determined to have Fiume as the Foreign Minister himself.

Baron Sonnino, in fact, was the nut no one could crack, and on more than one occasion he aroused the open hostility of his fellow delegates.

One afternoon, indeed, Mr Lloyd George begged him to moderate his demands, as he was 'holding up the whole peace of the world by his selfish

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national claims.' It was also due chiefly to Baron Sonnino that the Italian frontiers were, for many weeks, entirely closed to Jugoslavs; that several hundreds of Dalmatians, including one bishop, dozens of priests, doctors, teachers, were deported from Dalmatia to Italy; and that the Italians refused to recognise the diplomatic passports of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but only those of the old Kingdom of Serbia. At one time, he and Signor Orlando were scarcely on speaking terms, and there was no doubt that the Premier would have appointed a new Foreign Minister had he not realised when he went to Italy how much stronger was Baron Sonnino's position than his own.

The Italian propagandists were very successful in shaking the foundations of the none-too-stable Yugoslav Kingdom. There is no doubt that it was Italian money that kept the veteran King, or rather, ex-King of Montenegro in luxury at the Hotel Meurice in Paris, and that paid for the waging of an unceasing campaign against the proposal for the union of the Montenegrins with the Yugoslav

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Kingdom. Italian money, again, brought an Albanian delegation to Paris—under the leadership of a gentleman who had much too much to do with Turkey during the war—because the Albanian claims overlapped with those of the Southern Slavs. And the Yugoslav Delegation in Paris declared that it had proof that Italian money had been used extensively to foment discord between the Yugoslavs and the Greeks, the Rumanians, and, worse still, the Bulgarians.

In fact, trouble in the Yugoslav Kingdom was so frequent that it affords a slight excuse for a little incident that took place at Versailles. A daily bulletin of news was sent round to the various British officers and officials who were attached to the Supreme War Council in the Trianon Palace Hotel. One day, some one with a sense of levity that is not usually associated with Government offices, inserted in the bulletin an announcement to the effect that serious trouble had broken out between the Jugos and the Slavs in Dalmatia. And every one concerned initialled the news without a murmur.

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The Jugoslavs made a grave political mistake in asking President Wilson to arbitrate between them and the Italians in February, and from that moment the President began to grow thoroughly unpopular in Italy, besides which the other members of the Council of Ten felt that they had been insulted, and that the Serbians were appealing to President Wilson over their heads. Dr Trumbitch made the suggestion in a conversation with the United States President, who later mentioned it casually to Signor Orlando. The matter might have ended here had not the Italian Premier taken it as an official proposal. He naturally telegraphed to his Government to know what they thought of the suggestion, and the Government naturally replied that they disliked it very much indeed. Signor Orlando then announced more or less publicly that the Italian Government was unable to accept the Jugoslav suggestion, and the matter, from an informal conversation, grew to formal and official dimensions. The Great Ten preened their feathers to think that their authority had not been overlooked, and the Jugoslavs retired to the fastnesses of the Hotel

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Campbell, which they shared with the Portuguese, to ruminate on the frustration of their perfectly reasonable request. For it was reasonable that they should not want their case settled by a Council of Ten men the majority of whom were either their avowed opponents or were seriously compromised by a Secret Treaty with their opponents. President Wilson, I have been assured by close friends of his, was rather upset by the suggestion that he should act as arbitrator, as, although proud that the Jugo-slavs should thus pay him so high a compliment, he was not anxious to step into the limelight at that moment, when the lesser stars were becoming distinctly jealous.

The Italians did not fail to use the Serbian suggestion as propaganda both for their own cause and against President Wilson, in whom they could not but recognise a resolute foe of secret treaties. The newspapers under their influence—and there were many—made out that the President had sought the position of arbitrator, and that he was doing his best to bring discord into the conference. When the time came to attack him more directly

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because he would not sanction their claims, the soil had already been well prepared, and quite a number of people were won over to the Italian cause by the controlled newspapers, which, as I mentioned elsewhere, did not lose very much effect when the censor got to work.

One example of the censorship may be given. On the day after the Crown Prince of Serbia had left Paris, where he had been staying in the hope of influencing the Allies in favour of his people, there appeared a large blank space on the front page of one of the Paris papers. Every one immediately turned to it to try to find out what had been censored, but there remained only the heading and the last sentence. The heading was :—‘The Scandal of the Prince.’ The last sentence was :—‘But luckily the waiters were more gentlemanly than the Prince himself, and peace was restored.’

As soon as President Wilson had invited the Germans to come to Versailles on April 25th, the Italians began to importune the harrassed and muddled Great Four—or rather, Great Three—with the reminder that the problem of Fiume had

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to be solved before peace was signed with Germany. None of the great questions of the Peace Treaty had been settled even after three months, and there remained but eleven days before the Germans were due to arrive in which to draw up a treaty of peace. The cutting down of the plenary sessions to the Council of Ten, of the Council of Ten to the Council of Four, had failed dismally to speed things up, for the slowness was never due to too many people, but to the fact that the two chief men of the Conference were working along entirely opposite lines. Even the panic caused by the march of Bolshevism into Hungary had brought the great decisions no nearer.

So, in the midst of all this pitiful confusion, Signor Orlando began to play his trump cards. He insisted that the problem of Fiume should be considered at once. In vain the other members of the Great Four tried to wriggle out of it. They appealed to his knowledge of the necessity of an immediate peace with Germany, and of the danger of further delay; they pointed out that the proper time for the Italian claims was when the Austrian peace

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treaty was being prepared; they held out all sorts of alluring half-promises if the Italian Premier would leave over the question for a few weeks. But Signor Orlando had learnt the little copy-book maxim about a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush, and he had behind him the ever-growing pressure of Italian public opinion. So the Italian question was discussed.

It was discussed in the morning, it was discussed in the afternoon, for three or four precious days. President Wilson said what he thought about it, and then retired to let the signatories of the Pact of London 'stew in their own juice.' At times Signor Orlando retired as well, for every one knew what he thought about it—Fiume must be handed to Italy absolutely and unreservedly. And one can imagine Mr Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau sitting opposite each other wondering what in the world they were going to do next. There were daily meetings of the Italian delegation in their hotel to review the situation, and the waiting rooms became places of palpitating interest. Men of every nationality gathered there and stood about all day

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in groups to gossip over the latest rumours. Time and again the report was circulated that the Italian delegates had definitely decided to go home and time and again it was contradicted. One hardly dared mention the question at all, lest some one should tell you for the hundredth time that—'Orlando is fuming again,' or that 'Le President Wilson fume sa pipe avec un trieste sourire,' or that 'Le train fume à la Gare de Lyons' (ready to take the Italians home). And I heard some of the younger members of the British delegation discussing the state of their finances to see whether they had the money to buy a pot of paint so that, should the decision go against the Italians, they might go out at night and change the name of the Boulevard des Italiens to 'Boulevard des Yougo-Slavs.'

I believe it was on Sunday, April 20th, that President Wilson read out to M. Clemenceau and Mr Lloyd George, a statement he had drafted some days before with the assistance of his compatriots at the Hotel Crillon. Signor Orlando knew of the existence of this statement and its portent, even

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if he had never actually set eyes on the text. It would appear that both Mr Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau approved of the idea that it should be used if the Italians remained obdurate, but it was finally issued by President Wilson on his own initiative. This statement reminded the Italians of the existence of the Fourteen Points. 'The war has ended,' it pointed out, 'by proposing to Germany an armistice and peace which should be founded on certain clearly-defined principles which would set up a new order of right and justice. Upon those principles the peace with Germany has been not only conceived, but also formulated. Upon those principles it will be executed.

'We cannot ask the great body of Powers to propose and effect peace with Austria, and establish a new basis of independence and right in the States which originally constituted the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and in the States of the Balkans group, on principles of another kind.

'We must apply the same principles to the settlement of Europe in those quarters that we have applied in the peace with Germany. It was upon

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the explicit avowal of those principles that the initiative for peace was taken. It is upon them that the whole structure of peace must rest.

‘If those principles are to be adhered to, Fiume must serve as the outlet and inlet of the commerce, not of Italy but of the lands to the north and north-east of that port—Hungary, Bohemia, Rumania, and the States of the new Jugo-Slavic group.

‘To assign Fiume to Italy would be to create the feeling that we had deliberately put the port upon which all these countries depend for their access to the Mediterranean in the hands of a Power of which it did not form an integral part, and whose sovereignty, if set up there, must inevitably seem foreign, not domestic, or identified with the commercial and industrial life of the regions which the port must serve.

‘It is for that reason, no doubt, that Fiume was not included in the Pact of London, but was there indefinitely assigned to the Croatsians.’ And the concluding sentences ran :—‘Interest is not now in question, but the rights of peoples, of States new and old, of liberated peoples, and peoples whose

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rulers have never accounted them worthy of rights; above all, the right of the world to peace and to such settlements of interest as shall make peace secure.

'These, and these only, are the principles for which America has fought. These, and these only, are the principles upon which she can consent to make peace. Only on these principles, she hopes and believes, will the people of Italy ask her to make peace.'

The Italians did remain obdurate. On the afternoon of April 23rd, they were holding their customary meeting in their hotel and, according to Signor Orlando, they were just making a supreme effort on behalf of conciliation, when the bomb-shell burst. What those conciliatory steps would have been one does not know, but Signor Barzilai told me that same morning that on no account would the Italians change their attitude in the very least.

While this meeting was in progress it came to the ears of President Wilson that posters had been stuck up in the streets of Rome, on the instructions

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of Signor Orlando, announcing that Italy had definitely annexed Fiume. Now was the time to act. Without any hesitation President Wilson ordered his statement to be issued to the papers, and when he informed M. Clemenceau and Mr Lloyd George later of what he had done, it is stated that they fully approved of the step. At any rate it cleared the air that had been charged with thunder for weeks.

When some one entered the room where the Italian delegates were holding their meeting, and showed them a copy of *Le Temps* containing Mr Wilson's statement the excitement became intense. Signor Orlando rose to the occasion like a true Latin. This was a deliberate insult, he pointed out. Here was President Wilson speaking to the Italian people by entirely undiplomatic methods; the statement would have been an insult even had it been sent to the Italian Delegation direct; that it had come to the knowledge of the delegation by a French afternoon paper doubled or even trebled the insult. They would all go home. Nothing now mattered but what Signor Salandra, when he was

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Foreign Minister, had termed the *sacro egoismo*, the sacred selfishness, for Italy.

The news spread like wildfire. The groups who had hovered for days in the waiting-rooms of the Hotel Edouard VII. had at last the spicy information which they had been expecting. When the Germans came in two or three days' time there would be no Treaty for them to sign, for the Allies had all pledged themselves not to sign a separate peace. They could not sign without Italy, and Italy was not going to sign until she obtained what she wanted. The looks of excitement, the hurrying to and fro, the nervous laughter, the whispered threats, reminded one of those feverish hours in August, 1914, before Great Britain declared war. There was nothing of peace in the Hotel Edouard VII.

Late that evening an official *communiqué* was issued. 'As a result of the declaration by President Wilson on the Adriatic question the Italian Delegation has decided to leave Paris to-morrow.' And in a letter to Mr Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau, Signor Orlando said :—'The Italian Delegation

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finds it impossible to continue to participate usefully in the work of the Peace Conference.' Signor Orlando also issued an explanatory statement of his attitude, which contained the following phrases :—

'Yesterday, just at a time when the assembled Italian Delegation was discussing a counter-proposal which had been sent it by the British Prime Minister, which had as its object to reconcile the contradictory tendencies which had revealed themselves regarding Italy's territorial aspirations, the Paris newspapers published a message from the President of the United States in which the latter expressed his own ideas on the subject of the gravest of the problems submitted to the judgment of the Conference.

'The practice of addressing oneself directly to peoples assuredly constitutes an innovation in international relations. I do not mean to complain of that, but I take note of it in order in my turn to follow this example, since this new system, without any doubt, tends to give the peoples a wider participation in international questions, and

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I personally have always been of opinion that such participation was a sign of the new times.

‘Nevertheless, if such appeals are to be regarded as addressed to the peoples as apart from the Governments representing them—and I will even say almost against those Governments—I cannot but feel great regret at the thought that this procedure, hitherto employed only in the case of enemy Governments, is to-day for the first time applied to a Government which has been, is, and means loyally to remain, the friend of the great American Republic—namely, the Italian Government.

‘I may further complain that such a message, addressed to the people, should have been published at the very moment when the Allied and Associated Powers were negotiating with the Italian Government; that is to say, with that same Government whose assistance had been sought and appreciated in numerous and grave questions which have been treated hitherto in close and complete solidarity.

‘But I shall above all have reason to complain if the declarations in the Presidential message were intended to draw a distinction between the Italian

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Government and the Italian people, since in that case one would be going so far as to ignore and to deny the high degree of civilisation which the Italian people has attained in the forms of a democratic and liberal régime in which it yields place to no other people in the world.

‘To draw, so to speak, a distinction between the Italian Government and the Italian people, would be to imply that that great free people was capable of submitting to the yoke of a will that was not its own, and I shall be constrained to protest vigorously against suppositions so unjustifiably offensive to my country.

‘But to come to the contents of the Presidential message. It is entirely devoted to showing that the Italian claims outside certain limits laid down in the message violate the principles upon which the new régime of liberty and justice between the peoples should be founded. Those principles I have never denied, and President Wilson will do me the justice to acknowledge that in the long conversations we have had I have never appealed to anything but the force of the reason and justice on which I have

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always believed, and still believe, that Italy's aspirations are firmly based.

'I have not been so fortunate as to convince him. I deplore it sincerely, but President Wilson himself had the goodness to admit in the course of our conversations that truth and justice are the monopoly of no one, and that all men are liable to err, and, I may add, that error is all the easier, the more complex the problems to which principles are applied.

'When I say that more than once the Conference has found itself brought to a radical change of sentiment in cases where there has been a question of applying those principles, I do not think that I am showing any lack of deference towards that august assembly. On the contrary, such changes were and are a part of all human judgment.

'I merely mean that experience brought out all the difficulties encountered in the application of an abstract principle of nature to concrete cases of infinite complexity and variety. And so, with all deference, but with all firmness, I must regard the way in which President Wilson, in his message,

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applies his principles to the Italian claims as altogether unjustifiable.

‘And I further think that he who can proudly claim having proclaimed to the world the free right of people to self-determination is the very one who is bound to recognise that right in the case of Fiume, an ancient Italian city which proclaimed its Italian affinity before the Italian ships were anywhere near it, an excellent example of national consciousness retained for centuries.

‘To deny that right simply for the reason that it is a cause of a small community, would be to admit that the criterion of justice of different peoples varies according to their territorial extent.

‘And can one describe as excessive the Italian aspiration for the Dalmatian coast, this bulwark of Italy throughout the centuries which Roman genius and Venetian activity have made noble and great, and whose Italianness, defying all manner of implacable persecution throughout an entire century, to-day shares with the Italian nation the same emotions of patriotism?

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‘Why is it especially the Italians’ aspirations that are to be suspected of imperialistic cupidity?’

No Italians attended any meetings of commissions or committees except those which had no direct bearing on the peace. Preparations were made for Signor Orlando to leave at 2 o’clock.

Up to the very last moment, nearly every one seemed to take the Italian action as a gigantic piece of bluff. It was a splendid occasion for puns, and there was some betting, with the odds heavily in favour of the Italians giving in at the last moment. One member of the British Delegation found himself in the lift of the Hotel Majestic with an old lady who was bewailing the slowness of the Conference. ‘I wonder when it will all be over. Do you think we shall be able to go home soon?’ ‘Oh, yes, I think so,’ said the delegate, displaying a newspaper which announced Orlando’s impending departure in large letters, ‘I see by the papers that some of them are going to-day.’ The general tendency was to take the whole affair as a joke especially prepared to enliven a very dull conference.

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The Allied plenipotentiaries themselves were quite sure the Italians would not go. In fact, it was stated by officials of both the British and the French delegations that Signor Orlando had attended the meeting of the Council of Four, which was, of course, quite incorrect. Mr Lloyd George spent nearly all the morning with the Italian Prime Minister, and, although he was unable to persuade the Italians to remain in Paris, it was generally considered his attitude was very helpful. He put Signor Orlando into a fairly good temper, and he made himself generally popular, both with the majority who condemned the Italians, and the minority who supported them. The minority, as is generally the way, made a great amount of noise, and the *Echo de Paris*, led by its valiant and pertinacious 'Pertinax,' suggested that Italy had done a splendid thing in refusing to bow down to President Wilson and his so-called ideals, and that the sooner France had the courage to follow suit the better it would be for her.

When the Italian Delegates postponed their departure from 2 o'clock until the evening, and the few

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people who had hurried over their lunch to go down to the Gare de Lyons to see the Italians leave, returned looking rather disconsolate and, shame-faced, there was a general air of 'I told you so.' It was all only bluff. The Italians had been afraid to go.

And bluff it probably had been, but in the meanwhile things had been moving quickly in Italy itself. A huge gust of enthusiasm swept the country, and for some days it had been considered advisable to guard the United States Embassy and Consulates. The newspapers put even d'Annunzio in the shade. The *Idea Nazionale*, for example, wrote :—

'Just as Italy was alone in the war, so she remains alone in the peace, and as she alone won the war, so she alone will win her peace.'

The *Corriere della Sera* stated that, 'sooner or later the world will learn that it is no use to treat us like slaves and cowards.' Every one rallied round the Government, and even the Turati group of Socialists supported the claim to Fiume, and

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replied rather curtly to a telegram from the British Labour Party begging them not to support the designs of the imperialists—although not nearly so curtly as the messages printed in England gave one to imagine, as the reply was very mutilated in transmission, and was made to sound as though Turati entirely backed up the Government's every action, which was nowhere near the truth.

And in view of this manifestation of public opinion, Signor Orlando had no choice but to carry out his threat, especially as he had received a strong telegram from the King of Italy commending his action, and insisting he should never withdraw one inch from the position he had taken up. The very existence of this telegram was afterwards officially denied from Rome, but the text was given out indiscriminately in Paris after Signor Orlando had left. It would appear that it was considered of rather too drastic a character, and that it was decided to swear it had never existed.

Signor Orlando left Paris for Rome, with Signor Barzilai, the Marquis Salvago Raggi, and General Diaz, at 8.25 p.m. on April 24th.

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Even then the other Allies had not learnt their lesson, for they insisted that Baron Sonnino and Signor Salandra were remaining on in Paris to act as connecting links between the Conference and the Italian Delegation, and that Signor Orlando had gone to Rome as much as anything for political reasons. It was only when the two remaining plenipotentiaries, who were both old men, and therefore preferred to travel in the *train de luxe*, left Paris at 2 o'clock on the following afternoon, that it was no more possible to disguise the real situation.

The Jugoslavs, of course, were unfeignedly pleased by the Italian *coup de théâtre*, for it comforted them to see the very people who had accused them of spurning the Conference now doing so themselves with such vehemence. Dr Pachitch felt sure that the Italian action would assist the Jugoslav cause enormously, but whether he was right or wrong in this belief, he was wrong in his political forecast, for he told me it would certainly mean the immediate downfall of the Italian Government, which would be caused chiefly by the strong action of Signor

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Bissolati, who, as a matter of fact, supported the action of the Italian Delegation as fervently as any one. And the Jugoslavs were convinced that there would be serious fighting in Dalmatia on account of the Italian attitude.

That may yet come. But for the moment the Italians have obtained almost all they want. When they returned to Paris on May 6th, they had proved once more that the Conference that was to settle everything by peaceful negotiations was far more amenable to force than to any amount of well-based argument.

CHAPTER VIII

STEP BY STEP

ON January 15th, the Peace Conference made its first step—unfortunately a step backwards towards the old diplomacy. It decided that its work must be kept secret, that a bare official bulletin, as uninformative as the official war *communiqués*, should be issued daily, and that the newspaper correspondents who had come from all parts of the world should receive no news at all, inasmuch as any member of any delegation who knew anything at all should be sworn to secrecy. The British and American Press protested violently, but the French did not associate themselves with the demand for publicity except for a small democratic and socialist group that called an inter-allied meeting in the Chamber of Deputies, talked revolutionary

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action for an hour, and then passed for ever into forgetfulness.

On the same day, the representation of the various powers was decided, to the especial disgust of Belgium and Serbia, who were to be allowed two delegates apiece, the same number as were appointed for China, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Rumania, and the Czecho-Slovak Republic. Belgium and Serbia demanded, and finally obtained, three delegates, which was the number allowed to Brazil, presumably on account of her commercial importance.

There was also a great deal of talk about Russia, and a strong movement tried to secure the election of M. Sazonoff, Foreign Minister under the Czarist régime, as one of the delegates. There were too many counter movements, however, and M. Sazonoff retired to carry on vigorous propaganda elsewhere.

On January 16th, M. Clemenceau had to go to the Chamber of Deputies to nail down what Mr. Wilson himself called an 'abominable lie.' A New York paper had stated, with an extraordinary foresight, that President Wilson had threatened to

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leave France, and to take all the troops of the United States with him, unless his demands were agreed to.

The first plenary session was held on January 18th. M. Clemenceau managed to offend the neutrals by remarking that the whole civilised world had gathered at the one table to discuss its own future and there were, of course, no neutrals present. For the next few days, the Council of Ten heard various reports on the Russian situation, much to the distress of the more innocent delegates of the minor Powers, who had imagined there would be a plenary session nearly every day. M. Paul Hymans told me that he began to think he had asked for a larger representation for Belgium to no purpose. 'It's not going to be much good if we had ten delegates if there is going to be no conference for them to be delegated to,' was his way of putting it, and he voiced the general distress of the smaller nations.

The French had from the beginning no confidence in the Prinkipo proposal, still less in that of Mr Lloyd George, who suggested that the Bolsheviki

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should be invited to Paris. Mr Lloyd George, in fact, had a touch of panic about Bolshevism at this time. In a confidential interview to British journalists, the Prime Minister gave such details of the strength of Bolshevism that many of the papers refused to publish the report at all, not imagining for a moment that the information came from Mr Lloyd George. No anti-Bolshevik Russian troops could be trusted, it was said, even if supported by Allied troops. All food and munitions would have to be supplied by the Allies should they undertake a war against the Bolsheviks, whose army was growing stronger and better disciplined every day. Finally, the Allied military experts estimated that well over 150,000 troops would be needed to make the undertaking successful.

Mr Lloyd George refused to embroil British troops in a new war. The United States went further, and refused even to supply munitions or food for such an expedition. The French were thoroughly in favour of it, for they had not forgotten the money they had lost in Russian loans,

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and the Italians were willing to send troops if the other Allies did.

In the circumstances, as it was manifestly impossible for France to carry on the war alone, M. Clemenceau could not but agree with the Prinkipo proposal.

On January 25th, the second plenary session was held, and the membership of the various commissions announced, after Mr Wilson had outlined the League of Nations. The commissions were expected to have their reports ready within a month—although their members had not all been appointed by the end of the month—and there was talk of peace by the middle of March. It was on the occasion of this plenary session that M. Clemenceau let the delegates of the smaller nations see that they were to have nothing to do with the making of peace at all. I have heard more than one delegate declare since that he was glad he had had nothing to do with the compilation of such a treaty. As an excuse for his brusqueness, M. Clemenceau pointed out that every one had to make sacrifices. 'I have come here,' he said,

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'ready to sacrifice many of my opinions in order to reach the conclusions we all desire. I have already sacrificed some, and have done so gladly for the great common cause which unites us all here.' And he also mentioned that 'we cannot accept the suggestion that any committee should have the right to dictate to the five Great Powers,' in the tones one would expect from a high priest who was reproaching his flock for irreverence.

By this time the Commission on International Labour Legislation had been launched, and it began its career in a way that greatly pleased the working classes in England, although they soon lost confidence in its powers and good intentions. Mr G. N. Barnes, whose appointment as one of the British plenipotentiaries had met with a certain amount of opposition, decided to consult other labour leaders, and went through the draft of his proposals very carefully with Mr Henderson and Mr J. H. Thomas, and afterwards with a number of prominent Trade Unionists. The final Labour Convention was based entirely on Mr Barnes's draft, although it was modified very much indeed.

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At the end of January, Mr Wilson made his bid for the internationalisation of the German Colonies, and came into violent opposition with Mr Hughes, who told him that Australia had suffered more than the United States in the war, and that she was not going to give up her just recompenses for a pack of ideals. He ungenerously suggested that Mr Wilson opposed the annexation by the Allies of the German Colonies chiefly because he did not want Japan to have the Pacific Islands, but the President, undaunted by the imputations of his opponents, did all he could to see the League of Nations gain real control of the German Colonies, and even of former enemy territory in Europe. The European project had to be abandoned on account of the attitude of the Italians. And even when the President suggested the modified mandatory system as a compromise, he had still to water his propositions down, as the mandatory Powers had no intention at all of accepting orders from, and making annual reports to, the League of Nations.

At the beginning of February there were vague

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suggestions as to the freedom of the seas, which would have greatly limited the possibility of blockade in time of war and would have modified the right of search. But probably Mr Wilson had too much need of British assistance—for it was owing chiefly to Mr Lloyd George that the modified mandatory system had been accepted by the Allies—to press the point further, and the whole matter dropped without ever coming up for discussion by the Council of Ten.

On February 19th, some days after Mr Wilson's departure for the United States, which had been preceded by a great show of activity, and by a second plenary session to discuss the League of Nations, M. Clemenceau was shot by Cottin, and the work of the conference of necessity slackened down a great deal. The supporters of an anti-Bolshevik expedition insisted that the attempt was due to the Bolsheviks, and at one time, I happen to know, a great campaign against the more advanced Socialists, with arrests left and right—an *affaire*, in fact, such as they only have in France—was contemplated.

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A former French Premier assured me that, from a political point of view, M. Clemenceau had had a great stroke of fortune in being shot, since public support, which had been rapidly diminishing, at once veered round and made him more popular, and hence more powerful in the Conference, than ever he had been before. And every one admired the old man's splendid courage. After the attempt, the detectives began to keep a close watch around Mr Wilson and Mr Lloyd George, and the Prime Minister's comings and goings were kept secret.

By the middle of February, ideals were being forgotten, and people began to think of their pockets. There had been a great war, and it had cost a lot of money; why not get the money back? The discussions about reparations increased in importance until they dwarfed everything else. In England, the feeling was growing that the Prime Minister had forgotten his Bristol pledge to make Germany pay 'the whole cost of the war.' In France, M. Klotz, fearful to introduce any real income-tax or tax on capital, or to place the burden on the backs of the poor by further indirect taxation,

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was trying to hide the terrible position of French finances by saying that Germany would pay for everything—Germany, in fact, might have been some fairy godmother who was going to give us anything we wanted and to cure all our ills. And as people were beginning to lose their faith in fairies, the Council of Ten decided they must talk finance hard.

France had somehow to keep her people quiet. She demanded, with Belgium, the priority in all reparations to pay for the devastations of her territory. One is glad to think that the United States and Great Britain supported this demand, although it was reported that Mr Hughes thought all Germany's enemies should share the spoils proportionately. Mr Hughes, for example, saw no reason for granting a large credit to Belgium so that she could find her financial feet again.

The Americans were strongly of opinion that reparations should be used only in the direct sense, and should not include war pensions and the less direct costs of the war. The French, on the other hand, advocated demanding everything, including

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the most indirect costs of the war, in order to get as much as they could. Mr Lloyd George sat on the fence, looking over on the American side, until Lord Northcliffe and the three hundred members of Parliament came up and pulled him over the other way.

By the beginning of March, Marshal Foch had lost patience with the Peace Conference. He had no use for all this diplomacy. He only knew that at the moment he could make the Germans sign any sort of peace he liked in twenty-four hours, that in another month they might become truculent, or that their present government might be overthrown. Besides, the Generalissimo had visions of a campaign in Russia, and he wanted to get Germany off his hands at once.

He came to the Supreme Council and, in the phraseology of the Army, he 'put the fear of God in them.' At the same time, reports from British and other military officers in Germany showed the necessity of making an immediate peace lest the whole nation should 'go Bolshevik.' So it was decided that the preliminary peace must be signed

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by April 1st, especially as the Germans were talking of refusing to hand over their merchant fleet.

As soon as Mr Lloyd George returned from his short visit to London, there was a great show of 'speeding up,' but for days Mr Lloyd George was trying to make the others accept the principle of 'no conscription' for Germany, and our hopes of peace by April 1st rapidly dwindled. And with Mr Wilson's return to Paris, it was completely lost to view, as difficulties arose as to whether the League of Nations could be rushed through in time to be included in the Treaty of Peace. Here at least the President held firm. He had already sacrificed so many of his principles on which the League was to be based that he began to lose patience. Somehow the League was going through, even a very attenuated and pale League. Room must be found for it, in spite of French opposition and British indifference.

The situation became so serious, especially with the outbreak of Bolshevism in Hungary—which astounded the Council of Ten, although its symptoms had been plainly evident for weeks—that, on the

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request of the other Great Powers, Mr Lloyd George agreed to remain in Paris although the labour situation at home urgently needed his soothing tact. Czecho-Slovakia was on the verge of becoming Bolshevik, there was serious trouble in the new Serbian state, the Italian Majority Socialists had been converted to the doctrine of Lenin, and riots had occurred around the red flags of a procession as far away as Brisbane.

Somehow the Great Powers had to hide the fact that they were no nearer agreement than they had been on the first day of the Conference. They had to make some sensational move. They did. On March 25th they dropped the foreign Ministers and Japan out of the scheme of things altogether, and became the Great Four instead of the Great Ten, leaving the foreign ministers vastly surprised and upset. Henceforward, Mr Wilson, Mr Lloyd George, M. Clemenceau, and Signor Orlando decided to arrange peace alone, without ministers to guide them, in the utmost secrecy, and with only the ever-faithful Lieutenant Mantoux to keep them company in their Council Chamber. Hitherto,

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owing to the representations of the Press, M. Pichon and M. Tardieu had given meagre scraps of information to journalists. Even this was to cease. Everything was to be accomplished in secrecy and darkness. The *communiqués* became less informative than ever. 'The Council of Four heard the Belgian Delegates this morning,' they would say, or 'The Council of Four resumed its discussion of the financial clauses of the Peace Treaty. A decision was reached.'

Discussion of a draft Peace Treaty, prepared by Mr Lloyd George at Fontainebleau on March 22nd and 23rd—while every one thought he was playing golf—proceeded for some days, but apparently darkness was no more conducive to the forcing of the peace olive branch than the dim light of controlled publicity had been, and annoying people like the King of the Belgians, who arrived at Versailles like a bolt from the blue, and the Italian Delegates, began to remind the Council of Four that they must be up and doing. They listened to King Albert and promised to do their best—and did nothing; they considered the recommendations

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of various commissions, and did exactly what the commissions recommended should not be done; they sent General Smuts to Hungary to ask the Bolsheviks there to keep quiet as they were thinking; they listened to the Italian claims, and to Dr Trumbitch, and looked as though they were going to settle the Adriatic question, and then dropped it like a hot brick to return to the problem of reparations. Within one month it was 'authoritatively stated' in Paris that Germany would be called upon to pay amounts varying from £5,000,000,000 to £50,000,000,000.

The Great Four appear also to have been getting as tired of their own delays as was the general public, for, after they had been whispering to each other for a fortnight, President Wilson suddenly cabled to the Navy Department in Washington to despatch the *George Washington* to Brest—which cable, by the way, was held up in London for twenty-four hours for some unexplained reason. There was a great sensation in Paris, especially as feeling in France against President Wilson was again growing bitter. *Le Matin*, for example,

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went back to the old cry that the League of Nations was founded in order to enable American merchants to trade successfully with Germany. The Council of Four, it insisted, had adopted the method of putting the affairs of France after those of every other country. 'The armistice,' it said, 'gave the German fleet to Britain. The mandatory system assured her the support of President Wilson for the annexation of most of the German Colonies. The United States wanted the League of Nations, and they have got their League. These nations have nothing more to fear from Germany, and their merchants have before them the prospect of magnificently profitable markets. It is at this moment that we come to annoy every one with our demands. And if satisfaction is not given to us we are, from the financial point of view, a dead nation. We shall never feel secure again. And this is the result of our unparalleled sacrifices.'

The summoning of the *George Washington* was undoubtedly a piece of bluff, and it worked very well in one way, but it naturally still further increased the prevailing bad feeling. Certain American

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newspapers made a great sensation of it, and suggested that President Wilson had gone back on all that Colonel House had done while the President had been ill. This would appear to be entirely incorrect, for the President and Colonel House were, and still are, the very closest of friends, and know each other's minds so well that they could scarcely have acted along divergent lines. Colonel House won the appreciation of every one by his tact and ability, and, still more, by the facility with which he could replace his President when occasion arose.

It is certain that Mr Wilson was exceptionally frank to the other members of the Council of Four, and that he told them that they must abide by the Fourteen Points they had accepted when the armistice was signed. Mr Ray Stannard Baker, the director of the Press Department of the American Delegation and a close friend of the President, stated that Mr Wilson, who was very depressed and angry, remarked to him on the evening of April 8th, that all his work was being done for nothing. 'What is the good of a League of

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Nations,' he asked, 'if an unjust peace is made?'

At this stage of the Conference Mr Wilson stood alone, a sad, ill, weary man. One by one his principles had been distorted and disguised so that he could hardly recognise them himself. M. Clemenceau and Signor Orlando were both openly opposed to him, and Mr Lloyd George was very uncertain. He had tried again and again to remind the Allies that they had accepted the Fourteen Points as the basis for peace, and Admiral Grayson, his friend and medical attendant, stated that the President's chill had been very much aggravated by worry and disappointment. Only in the Socialist papers in France could he find the slightest encouraging remark.

It is more than probable that the brusqueness of the President's actions, and his impatience towards the close of the Conference were due to the loneliness and disappointment of his position. His unexpected opposition to Brussels as the Capital of the League of Nations, and his sudden statement later on as to the fate of

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Fiume, would appear to have been due to these causes.

On April 11th, a plenary session—the first for two months—was held to discuss the International Labour Charter, which, like its big brother, the League of Nations, had lost much of its strength in its war with the Peace Conference. The most unhappy man at the session was probably Mr Barnes, who knew a good deal more about the importance of the measures that were being discussed for the protection of the working classes, than did most of those comfortable, morning-coated plenipotentiaries—many of them were frankly bored—and who had worked steadily to bring the draft, as drawn up by him and other British labour leaders, safely along the perilous path of peace.

As in the case of the League of Nations, the rigidity of the American Constitution had necessitated the insertion of the enfeebling 'reservation' clause for the Monroe doctrine, so the Americans were unable to accept Article 19, which laid down that every draft convention adopted

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by a two-thirds majority by the International Conference must be ratified by every State unless the legislature of the State disapproved of it, within one year. Mr Barnes in February was full of mysterious hints as to international action to compel any State to carry out the conventions properly; Mr Barnes, in April, after he had come up against Mr Sam Gompers, and the American Constitution, was beginning to believe that the Labour Charter had no weight behind it at all.

In the end, the famous Article 19 was modified so that decisions of the International Labour Conference might be taken as recommendations only, and therefore not necessarily adopted by the different states, although they should be discussed by the national legislature within one year. Only when a national legislature had accepted some recommendation but did not put it into force would the League of Nations be called upon to appoint a Commission of Inquiry and, if necessary, to take economic steps to assure that the offending State should carry out its promises.

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As a protest against this weak compromise, the Italian members of the Labour Commission refused to vote.

But Mr Barnes had other worries. Nine general articles for the welfare of the workers had been drawn up for inclusion in the Peace Treaty, and the Labour Commission was determined to get these points accepted. Difficulties were anticipated as Japan and India were unwilling to accept the principle of an eight-hour day, the Dominions objected to a clause assuring equal treatment in any country for foreigners with the nationals of that country, and several countries did not like the idea of equal pay for men and women for equal work.

The Great Four had some qualms about the plenary session of April 11th. These points had been drafted by the Commission and the Great Four did not like these points. They felt that the plenary session would support the recommendations of the Commission. Thus the Great Four would either find themselves defeated and forced to include in the Treaty several points they did

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not like, or they would have to act over the head of the plenary session, and thus show it for what it was—a vague, heterogeneous body that had no power but that must be allowed to believe that it had a great deal of power.

The Council of Four was very cute. It spent the whole of the plenary session of April 11th in mild discussion about the Labour Charter itself, and, when every one was just expecting reference to be made to the nine articles to be included in the Peace Treaty, M. Clemenceau suddenly hopped to his feet and announced that the sitting was closed. Then the Council got hold of Mr Barnes and bullied him. Mr Barnes drafted, with the help of Mr Balfour, the nine points in a more modified and mollifying way, but still the Great Four objected, and they called on Sir Robert Borden, who was supporting them on account of the dislike of the Dominions for a clause securing equal rights for foreigners and nationals, and instructed him to propose another set of nine points with all the sting taken out of them. These were proposed at the plenary session of April 28th, when the League of Nations Covenant

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was finally adopted, and they were rushed through without much objection from the smaller powers, none of whom liked to take the responsibility of postponing peace by starting a heated and probably useless debate. M. Vandervelde, it is true, had something to say in favour of the Commission's original nine points, but he, too, felt it was better to secure unanimity among thirty-two different nations even at the expense of making the text somewhat less definite. So the Council of Four had their way once again.

On April 14th, when everything still remained to be decided, and every one was losing patience, the Council of Four realised it was time to make another sensational step. In order to appease the ever-increasing resentment of the peoples of the world, 'President Wilson, as spokesman of the Council of Four,' announced that the German delegates were to be invited to Versailles on April 25th.

Five days later, there appeared in *The Daily Mail* a special interview with Marshal Foch, in which the Generalissimo insisted that 'now, having reached

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the Rhine, we must stay there. Impress that upon your fellow-countrymen. It was our only safety; their only safety.' It was the most important interview of any kind granted during the Peace Conference, and M. Clemenceau suppressed it in France! Furthermore, three Parisian daily papers were suppressed for referring to it or for printing extracts from it. Apparently the French Premier feared that if it were generally published in France, it might create such a wave of public feeling as to render the compromise of the left bank of the Rhine impossible, and hence make peace even more remote than it was. Marshal Foch continued to insist upon the necessity of maintaining our hold on the Rhine permanently, until the very day before the Peace Treaty was handed to the Germans, when he made a final appeal to the Council of Four. There is reason to believe that towards the end of the Conference relations between him and M. Clemenceau became strained as the Generalissimo considered the French Premier was not insisting sufficiently on the safeguards necessary to France.

About the middle of April, Russia again came

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to the forefront for a few days. A number of neutrals, after consultation with Mr Hoover, asked Dr Nansen, the explorer, to organise an international neutral commission to supply food to Russia, where millions of people were starving. The neutrals appealed to the Allies for permission, and won the immediate support of the United States, and, to a slightly lesser degree, of Great Britain. At first France was opposed to the scheme, as she feared it would imply some sort of recognition of the Bolsheviks, but it was pointed out that the proposition would, on the other hand, prove a very formidable weapon for use against the existing *régime*. Dr Nansen, who was obviously so moved by humanitarian motives that he was able to forget all about politics, agreed that the food should be distributed only by the commission's own officials, and not by Bolshevik officials. Thus, argued the French, the peasants will know they are being fed by American food through neutral channels owing to the action of the Allies, and they will be won over from Bolshevism. The Supreme Economic Council, which, under various names,

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and in various stages of evolution, had done such splendid work to relieve the starvation in Central and Eastern Europe, strongly supported the Nansen scheme, which was sanctioned after a few days, although not without a number of suggestions to the effect that the Americans were in favour of it in order that they might do a lot of profitable business, and innumerable rumours were started in Paris of supposed economic agreements of one sort and another that were said to be in course of preparation between the United States and Bolshevik Russia. Although the rumours were false, they achieved the object of their inventors, for the gulf between French public opinion and American public opinion widened perceptibly.

And then came the deadlock over Fiume, and the deadlock over Kiao-Chow, as the Japanese, who were very disgruntled at being left out of the Council of Four when it was formed, refused blankly to sign the peace unless they were given Kiao-Chow without delay.

Again President Wilson was defeated, and both

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Italians and Japanese had their way in the end, although it meant a delay in the presentation of the peace terms from April 26th, or thereabouts, to the never-to-be-forgotten afternoon of May 6th, when the belligerents faced each other across the tables in the Trianon Palace Hotel.

CHAPTER IX

THE GERMANS REACH PARIS

ON the evening of April 29th, four years after the British and Canadians had thrust back the German Armies when they broke through to the north of the old, burning city of Ypres on their way to Paris, the German Peace Delegates arrived in Versailles.

Their forerunners had been dribbling in for days. For days Baron Von Lersner had been tormenting Colonel Henry, the French officer who was responsible for the welfare of the Germans, and M. Houdaille, the special police magistrate, with demands for more liberty or more comfort. For days the portly Herr Walter, of the German Telegraphs, had been entangling himself in meshes of telephone wire that was to be put in order for the plenipotentiaries. For days minor clerks had been preparing the rooms that had

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been allotted for the great men of the new Germany.

As a matter of fact, the arrival of the actual plenipotentiaries, for which we had all been waiting for months, was the simplest ceremony imaginable. There was nothing at all of the pomp and impressiveness that you always find in picture galleries, where artists have set out to portray the meetings of victors and vanquished in other wars. Vaucresson, to which the Germans were brought because of a 'block' on the line to Versailles, is a quiet, pretty little village in the Forêt de Meudon, a wood justly beloved by the Parisians, who have dotted their quaint villas here and there on the hill-slopes. And the inhabitants of Vaucresson were not going to be put out for any old Germans. Those who habitually stayed indoors remained indoors, those who were in the habit of going round to the *café* to gossip in the evening went to their *café* as usual, and did not even trouble to go a few yards out of their way to see the sight at the station.

And, indeed, it was not the sort of night on which one would choose to stand around, for those

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who were at the station will remember above all the bitter wind that swept over the hills along the platform, and the cold, driving rain. Next in their minds will come the recollection of the undignified rush when the Germans did arrive. Count Brockdorff Rantzau and his colleagues must have been very astonished at the lack of formalities at their reception, especially as they had in their veins the blood of a people that delighted in show, and in stiff etiquette, and in careful organisation, and in calling people 'Herr Oberlehrer,' or 'Herr Professor,' or 'Herr Kommerzienrat,' or anything but the man's name, pure and simple.

When the train drew up in the station and the leader of the German Delegation climbed down from the high carriage and walked towards the little group of officials on the platform, there followed what some one in the crowd termed an 'ungodly rush.' Reporters surged round the group, and though the few sentences of greeting that appeared in the papers may well have been uttered, nobody but M. Chaleil himself could have heard them. Motor engines started up outside, photographers

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clambered over each other to get pictures. Flashes of magnesium were so frequent, that they seemed almost to be one continuous flash, and clouds of heavy white smoke rolled to westward on the wind. The Germans made their stiff little bows—the same sort of bow as they used to make when they came to ask a lady for a dance—and the knots of people on the platform moved towards the exit where the motor cars and the Paris motor omnibuses were waiting. The first car extricated itself from the dark masses in the road outside the station, and Count Brockdorff Rantzau was driving away to Versailles to hide from the vulgar gaze until late on the following afternoon, when he went out for a short motor drive, accompanied by French officers, through the beautiful land his Kaiser had thought to conquer.

At first, the Germans seemed thoroughly pleased with their new quarters. And well they might be, for the Hotel des Reservoirs had not an almost international reputation for nothing, and the main block of the building had housed the King of the Belgians only a week or two before when he flew

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to Versailles to plead for Belgium before the Conference. The Hotel des Reservoirs and the Trianon Palace Hotel, where the terms were later handed to the Germans, were undoubtedly the most pleasant spots connected with the Peace Conference. The Hotel Astoria, with its rooms turned hastily into offices, the Hotel Majestic, the Foreign Office, about which even our enthusiastic old friend, Baedeker, can find nothing interesting to say, and whose chief architectural fault is that it is so perfect as to lack all character, the gloomy Ministry of War—I would give all these (if they were mine to give) for one room in the Hotel des Reservoirs looking out on the Bassin de Neptune and the old Park of Versailles.

But very soon the German delegation had complaints to make. Apparently they had been promised entire liberty in Versailles, and they were soon to find that their liberty was restricted. For the first day the members had a great time, although they had been told casually that they were only supposed to wander about in the streets connecting the Hotel des Reservoirs with the Hotel Suisse

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and the Hotel Vatel, where the lesser lights were quartered, so as 'to avoid any possible unpleasantnesses with the inhabitants of the town.'

One or two of them went up to the Palace of Versailles, and the ghosts of the ancient kings of France, peering out from the secret peephole that gives on to the main courtyard, must have held their phantom breath for a moment in the fear that after all the Germans had conquered, seeing that they walked about with so much freedom. Some of the German journalists, being a curious lot, penetrated to the remotest streets of Versailles, and it was reported that one German was stopped actually on one of the Grands Boulevards of Paris. Other members of the Delegation bought dozens of picture post cards to send back to Germany by 'Kurierpost,' as souvenirs of the Peace Conference. A strange people, to wish to send souvenirs of the moments of their most bitter shame !

It was interesting to see the way in which the inhabitants of Versailles accepted their visitors as a matter of course. In almost every case they treated Germans who came in their shops exactly

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as they would have treated Frenchmen, or Englishmen, or Americans. The only exception of which I heard, was a very unfortunate one. A very well-known English lady, resident in Paris, walked into a chemist's shop in Versailles, and asked the man behind the counter if he had any aspirin tablets. The man drew himself up in fine scorn. 'We have, but not for you,' he said majestically, as he turned his back on her.

But in most cases there was no difficulty in distinguishing the Germans from the other people of Versailles. During the war the Allies have come closer together in many ways, superficial, as well as profound, and nearly every man nowadays wears turned-up trousers, and it would be difficult, unless you specialise in such things, to say if a collar or a tie or a suit had been bought in Paris or Rome or London. But the Germans, in their four-and-a-half years of entire isolation, have gone through a strange evolution of their own,—they have grown so far apart from the rest of mankind in these few years that one entirely ceases to wonder that a Maori, a Chinaman, and an Eskimo are all

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descendants of the same lady and gentleman who are said to have strolled about in the Garden of Eden. Never before were there such square shoulders and suits, such long trousers that seem to drag along the ground behind their owners like trains ! Before the war you could draw a German in a series of circles; now he seems to have squared his shoulders against the world, literally as well as figuratively.

The attitude of the German delegates was hardly what one would expect of a defeated people. One would say that Count Brockdorff Rantzau sent away no souvenir post cards of the 'Paxkonferenz,' but dejection was the exception and not the rule. Most of the women were very timid and nervous—so much so that all hostility towards them disappeared as though by magic—but the men seemed to enjoy being stared at and photographed. One stout gentleman waited about in the cold for nearly half an hour, in the hope of being 'snapped' by a British newspaper photographer, who was laboriously erecting an enormous camera in front of the German letter-box in the courtyard. But the German must have become a decided Anglophobe

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when the capricious Englishman suddenly decided the letter-box was not worth photographing after all, and staggered away with his apparatus, leaving the German to hurry into the hotel through a glass door, on which some colleague had stuck the notice—which might refer to the unfriendliness of the onlookers or to the unpleasant weather—'Bitte Thur schliessen; es ist kalt draussen.' (Please close the door; it is cold outside). The German delegation brought their own photographer with them, as well as their own hairdresser.

On the first day a group of curious spectators gathered in the archway of the hotel, attracted by a number of red wooden boxes which were being unpacked in the courtyard and which one old Frenchman had loudly declared contained a new and very violent sort of bomb. The 'new sort of bombs' turned out to be typewriters, that were later to be used by feverish Germans typing out the many notes that Count Brockdorff Rantzau sent to M. Clemenceau to obtain modifications of the peace terms. The typewriters might go in a special Peace Museum with the gold pen presented by a

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party of schoolgirls to M. Clemenceau so that he might have something with which to sign the Peace Treaty.

On the second day, the Germans found their liberties were much more restricted, and they had no opportunities of wandering round the town into all the shops, although an old lady in a newspaper kiosk just outside the hotel made hay while the sun shone, and sold pounds' worth of post cards to them. Precautions were taken to prevent any one from chatting to them—policemen were dotted thickly about the streets like pebbles on the shore—and people who had penetrated on the previous day as far as the Germans' courtyard were now excluded, so that nearly every one coming out of the hotel was taken for a German. I had been inside to see M. Houdaille, and as I came out into the street a little girl, who had been brought by her mother '*pour voir les Boches,*' pulled excitedly at the good dame's arm. '*En voilà un,*' she cried, as she pointed at me, '*en voilà un.*' And she was so pleased about it, that I would not have undeceived her however much I felt insulted.

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Later on, control became much stricter still. Two little parallel wooden fences were erected so as to enclose a path from one hotel to another, and along this path the Germans had to proceed every time they came out of doors, unless they went into the enclosed space of park behind the Hotel des Reservoirs. No use any more to try to look like a Frenchman, or to slink along by the walls of the houses in the hope of not being noticed. German you were, and German every one knew you to be. Defeated were your armies, and it was useless to try to look as though they were not.

There are very many people who still talk of 'humbling the enemy,' who wanted Germany to make more open confessions of her defeat, who would have liked to march to Berlin to dictate peace there. May it comfort them to reflect on that enclosed path down the rue des Reservoirs in Versailles. Only in 1871, when the Germans marched down the Champs Elysées, has France seen a proud race so humbled, even though there be nothing very spectacular about it. Those

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who are still not satisfied because, they argue, Germany would have been much harsher had she been in our place, are, without any doubt, quite correct; but might they not do well to remember that we are not Germans, and that it was because the Allied people believed that they stood for something better, cleaner, more chivalrous than the German, that they went to war? Some of us there are who had hoped that the old doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth had been discredited, not only for reasons of world peace, but also for reasons of world morality. We would not have the material victors become the moral losers. . . .

Six months after the signing of the armistice, four months after the beginning of the Peace Conference, the Germans were driven up to the Trianon Palace Hotel, and were led into the pleasant room looking out on to the trees of the park to receive the Peace Treaty at the hands of M. Dutasta, the Secretary General of the Conference.

It was a little unfortunate that, when M. Clemenceau stated that 'the time has come to settle our

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accounts,' an effect of the light should have made him look like a walrus again, so that one was reminded so irresistibly of:—

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
To talk of many things . . .'

That the Germans dislike the terms of peace is, at the present moment, a matter of no importance; that the terms of peace may not be the terms that can assure peace in the future is a matter of the very greatest importance, if all the rough wooden crosses that stand over the graves of the soldiers who fell in Belgium and France and Gallipoli and wherever else men have died for a dim ideal have any importance at all.

It has been reported in *Le Matin*, that Mr Wilson stated, after examining the German counter-proposals, that the Allies' Peace Treaty 'is entirely in accordance with my Fourteen Points.' This report can scarcely be correct, for it is in such complete contradiction to so much that he has said, both publicly and privately, and done during the Conference.

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However, it is not for us to discuss here the actual terms of peace, and the compromises of idealism and of selfishness that have gone to make it up. We shall have ample opportunity to judge how good a peace or how indifferent a peace it is during the next five years. And we all hope for the best.

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